THE 87TH ANNUAL RING AWARDS

THE BIBLE OF BOXING

THE BEST OF 2015

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FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

TYSON FURY

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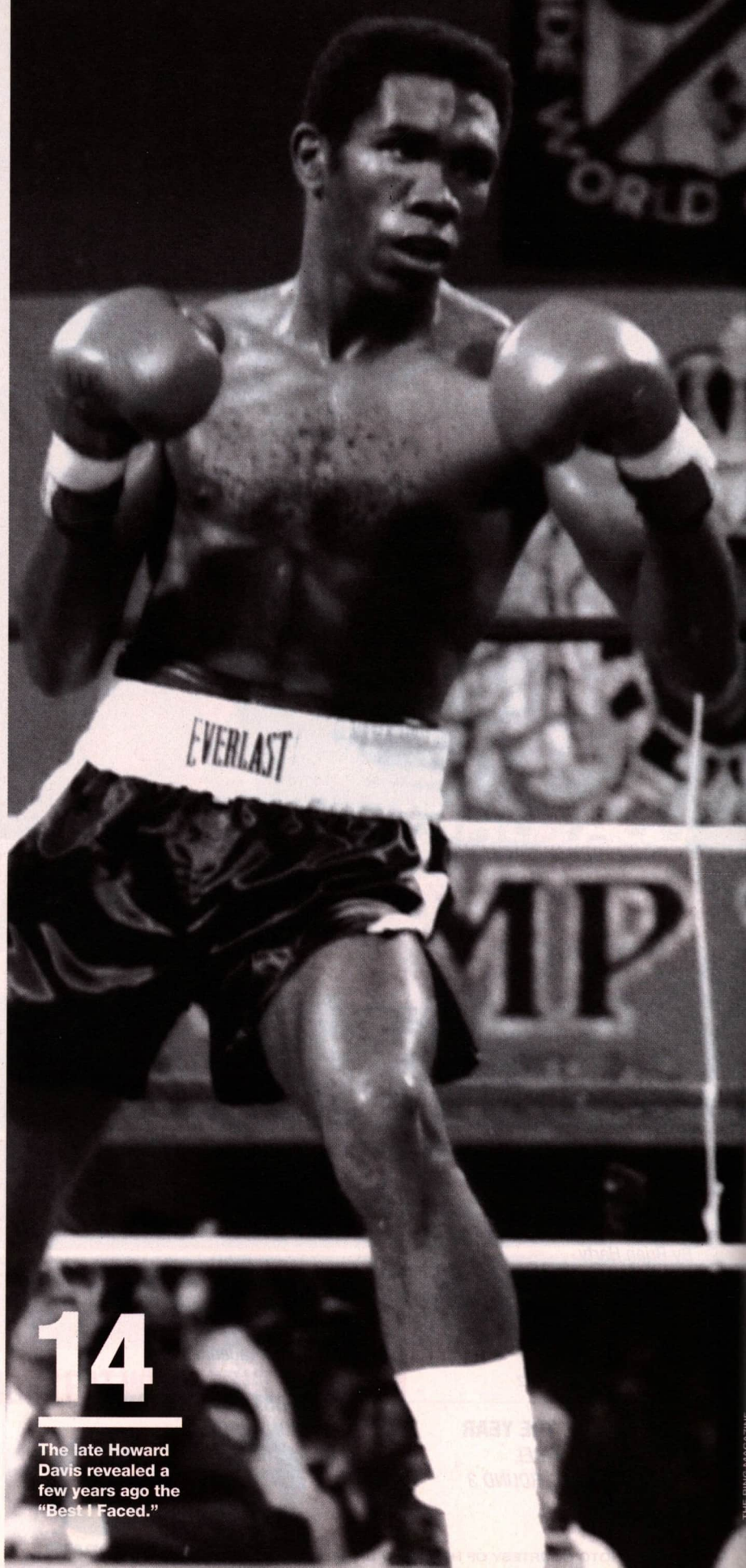

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The late Howard Davis revealed a few years ago the "Best I Faced."

The RING

VOLUME 95, NO. 3 | APRIL 2016

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MANAGING EDITOR
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR
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comeoutwriting@sepublications.com
or P.O. BOX 251753,
Los Angeles CA, 90025

THE RING (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 95, NO. 3 (April 2016), is published nine times per year (no issues in June, October and February) by Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC, P.O. Box 90254 Brooklyn, NY 11209. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11209 and additional post offices. Postmasters: Send change of address notices to: THE RING, P.O. Box 433122, Palm Coast, FL 32164-3122. Single copy price $8.95 in U.S.A. and Canada (£4.95 in the U.K.). Subscription price U.S. And possession $49.00 for nine issues; Canada and Mexico add $7 for nine issues per year and all remaining countries add $15.00 for nine issues per year. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2016 Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy of the content of advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRES AND RATES: (213) 233-2952. U.S. / Canadian and International distribution by Kable Distribution Services Inc., 14 Wall Street, Suite 4C, New York, NY 10022. UK distribution by Comag Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England. Printed in U.S.A

A DIFFICULT DECISION

The process of choosing the 2015 Fighter of the Year wasn't easy.

A case could be made for Canelo Alvarez, who had the biggest year of his career, clearly beat a future Hall of Famer in Miguel Cotto and helped generate a striking pay-per-view buy rate of 900,000 in that fight.

Same goes for Gennady Golovkin, who stretched his remarkable streak of knockouts to 21 against solid opponents Martin Murray, Willie Monroe Jr. and David Lemieux.

And Roman Gonzalez emerged as the pound-for-pound king in 2015 with three more dominating victories, putting the flyweight division on the map for the first time since Michael Carbajal and Chiquita Gonzalez were doing their thing.

That said, it really came down to Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Tyson Fury.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. was in the running.

The long-awaited and ridiculously rich Mayweather-Manny Pacquiao fight was a heartbreaking disappointment but that wasn't Mayweather's fault, unless you want to complain about his fighting style.

The best fighter of his generation handled Pacquiao – who remains in the pound-for-pound Top 10 – much as he had handled his other opponents, which is to say easily. That seems to have been lost in the post-fight fallout.

That victory trumps any triumph of Alvarez, Golovkin or Gonzalez in 2015, although one certainly can criticize Mayweather's choice of Andre Berto as his "final" opponent.

Fury did Mayweather and the rest one better, though. Remember: Wladimir Klitschko had been nearly as dominating as Mayweather in recent years. He had beaten every fighter put in front of him since 2004, which made it almost impossible to imagine him losing.

Then he did. And it wasn't the result of a lucky punch, the manner in which many imagined Klitschko might one day fall. No, Fury turned the tables on Klitschko by using his height advantage and surprising mobility to outbox the Ukrainian icon and win the RING, IBF, WBA and WBO titles.

Fury is the first Briton to be recognized as *the* heavyweight champion since Lennox Lewis retired in 2003.

As upsets go, it doesn't get much bigger than Fury's victory. He made history. Repeat: The man made history, which none of the others can claim unless you're referring to the money generated by Mayweather-Pacquiao.

On top of that, Fury instantly made a moribund division relevant again. Face it, few outside Europe gave a hoot about the heavyweights in good part because of the Klitschko brothers' domination.

Suddenly the names Fury, Klitschko, Deontay Wilder, Anthony Joshua, Luis Ortiz and even Alexander Povetkin are uttered on a regular basis. The division is alive. That's a direct result of Fury's accomplishment, another reason he emerged as Fighter of the Year for 2015.

Detractors might point out that Fury's only other victory was a gimme against Christian Hammer early last year but the others also had relatively easy fights. Hammer was merely a stay-sharp prelude to the opportunity of his life, one with which Fury radically altered his life and boxing.

Bryant Jennings (left) ultimately couldn't withstand the power of rising heavyweight Luis Ortiz on Dec. 19.

NAOKI FUKUDA

COME OUT WRITING

JIM LAMPLEY DEFENDS COMPUBOX

In the January 2016 issue you printed a letter from a reader whose premise was that CompuBox is "a fraud." In legal terms, "fraud" is defined as intentional deception, usually for monetary gain. I couldn't let that characterization go unchallenged.

For 95 years gloved prizefighting made its way in public consciousness without the benefit of a systematized numerical profile of the competition, the "box score" which has been vital to the popularization of most every other sport you can name. When CompuBox first came along there was no shortage of skeptics on press row, and deservedly so. I myself wasn't sure the system could produce convincing results. But that was 30 years ago.

Nowadays, quite frequently when the scoring of a fight becomes an issue of controversy, writers build their leads on CompuBox numbers. That would never have happened if veteran, sophisticated reporters of boxing with decades of observational experience hadn't come to the conclusion CompuBox is providing a credible statistical portrait of what goes on in the ring. And though it is indeed reasonable to suggest the task of counting punches ultimately yields more of a close-as-possible estimate than an exact count, they indisputably are.

I have a unique perspective. Before every significant fight I am given a numerical analysis of the matchup compiled by CompuBox and at the end a numerically-based prediction. Their accuracy is uncanny. Recent examples, including the near-misses: Canelo by late-round TKO over Cotto, Francisco Vargas by late TKO over Takashi Miura, GGG by TKO over David Lemieux, Badou Jack over Anthony Dirrell, Lucas Matthysse by "thrilling decision" over Provodnikov, Deontay Wilder by decision over Bermane Stiverne. I could go on and on. These predictions are solely fueled by CompuBox punch-counting.

There are "frauds" in boxing. CompuBox is not one of them. Thank you for the opportunity to rebut.

Jim Lampley
Woodland Hills, Calif.

KLITSCHKO CAPITULATION?

For years I've had to endure criticism about how U.S. boxing fans are somewhat less sophisticated because we don't support Wladimir Klitschko. The knock has always been that U.S. fans don't appreciate the science of boxing and therefore can't appreciate his cerebral approach whereas German fans view boxing as more of a ballet performance. Well, if Klitschko's performance against Fury was supposed to be a ballet, it must have been The Nutcracker because his were clearly missing. As many fans suspected, when he finally met an opponent he couldn't wear down by clutching and grabbing he withered away rather than waging war. There would be no dying on his shield or throwing caution to the wind because of his burning desire to win but rather a tacit surrender of the heavyweight championship, perhaps the most prized possession in all the sports world. I can't fathom Muhammad Ali, Evander Holyfield or Joe Frazier ever capitulating like that. As an American boxing fan who was never thrilled with Klitschko, I feel vindicated.

Randy Cook
Cherry Hill ,N.J.

NOT IMPRESSED

First things first. Congratulations to Tyson Fury on defeating Wladimir Klitschko. He earned it. I just wasn't impressed with Fury's performance, though. Fury is a big guy who is awkward but he doesn't have much boxing skill. Leaves me to wonder how much of Fury's victory had to do with him and how much had to do with Klitschko just not showing up to fight for whatever reason. It is nice to see something unexpected happen in the heavyweight division for the first time in 10 years. Too bad Fury's post-fight interview was more entertaining than the fight itself.

Davis Clouse
Omaha, Neb.

SAY IT ISN'T SO

Manny Pacquiao vs. Tim Bradley III? This fight doesn't make any sense. Manny won 20 of the 24 rounds they have fought so why fight for a third time? I wish Bob Arum were the one retiring.

Victor Rivero
Pacifica, Calif.

KEEP BOXING IN THE ACADEMIES

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the article on boxing training in our service academies (March 2016). I concur with those who support keeping the sport in the academies. Indeed, boxing teaches one to remain mentally sharp under pressure. Thus, it helps condition one for combat. I was an amateur boxer from 1975 to 1979 and I am mighty glad I was because such training toughened me up and helped me to live in a rugged environment. Cadets who whine about the toughness of the boxing classes should think again about defending America. The training produces fighters, which is what our country needs in our service academies.

Robert W. Burton
Santa Clarita, Calif.

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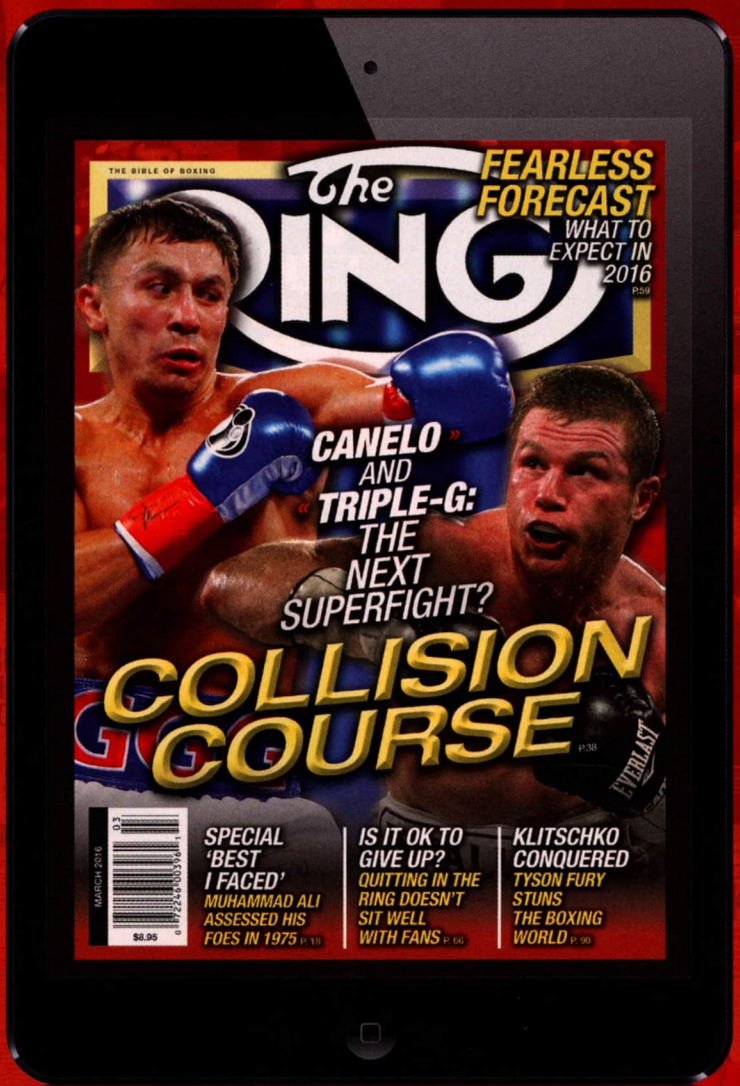

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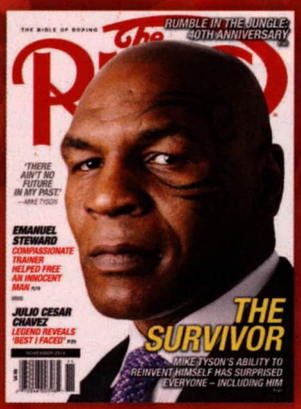

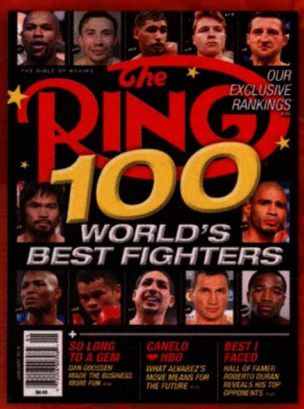

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ADVANCED DEGREES

Degrees of separation between fighters of the past and their more contemporary counterparts. This month: Some believe that badly faded Roy Jones Jr. was a great fighter at his peak. With that in mind, regular Advanced Degrees contributor Gregg Morgan – saying "now that his career is (hopefully) over" – linked Jones with the greatest boxer ever in only five steps even though the late Sugar Ray Robinson last fought in 1965. Have a look:

SUGAR RAY ROBINSON fought
DENNY MOYER, who fought
RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ, who fought
MILTON MCCRORY, who fought
MIKE MCCALLUM, who fought
ROY JONES JR.

Roy Jones Jr. (inset) once dominated his opponents, much as a prime Sugar Ray Robinson did.

JONES JR.: ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES; ROBINSON: HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

10 A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

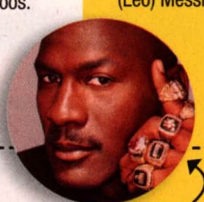
This month: With Deontay Wilder and Tyson Fury joining the ranks of heavyweight titleholders, the list of tallest champions has changed. Here's how it looks now (ties in chronological order).

« 1. **7-0 NIKOLAI VALUEV**
2. **6-9 TYSON FURY**
3T. **6-7 HENRY AKINWANDE**
3T. **6-7 VITALI KLITSCHKO**
3T. **6-7 DEONTAY WILDER**
6. **6-6½ JESS WILLARD**
7T. **6-6 PRIMO CARNERA**
7T. **6-6 ERNIE TERRELL**
7T. **6-6 WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
10T. **6-5 TONY TUCKER**
10T. **6-5 RIDDICK BOWE**
10T. **6-5 LENNOX LEWIS**

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

1 **GRIGORY DROZD** CRUISERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER ★
2 **ILUNGA MAKABU** CRUISERWEIGHT CONTENDER ★ 3 **DMITRY KUDRYASHOV** CRUISERWEIGHT CONTENDER

FIGHTER	MUSIC	CAR	FOOD	TATTOOS	ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING	MOVIE	VIDEO GAME
1.	"Russian music – **Sergey Kuprik**, Lesopoval, Zemfira, Grigory Leps, Polina Gagarina. Music in general, I like rap and R&B."	"I drive a Land Cruiser. Wish I had **Bugatti Veyron**."	"Grilled prawns, Grilled salmon, salmon tartar, borscht, pelmeni, shashlyk and lamb chops."	"None."	"No one in particular but I do like hockey, biathlon and table tennis."	"'Knockdown,' 'Troy' and 'Legenda No. 17.'"	"**Warcraft**."
2.	"I like house music."	"I'm not into things like that, I drive a Toyota."	"I like vegetables and bananas."	"No I don't have tattoos." 	"I like (Leo) Messi."	"I like action movies, ones with Jet Li."	"I don't like video games."
3.	"I am a music lover, I listen to everything, but most of all I prefer quiet, classical music."	"I have Nissan SUV. At this moment I am completely satisfied with this car. In the future, with financial possibilities, I'll buy a new one."	"Healthy eating, that's my priority."	"I do not have any tattoos and don't plan to get any."	"I would single out **Michael Jordan**."	"I watched all of the Rocky movies and like them the most."	"I do not play video games."

— **Anson Wainwright**

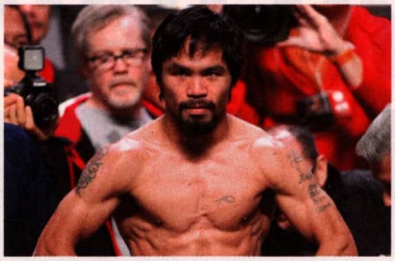
GOOD, BAD, WORSE

By **Michael Rosenthal**

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH

GOOD

I hesitate to say that the retirement or decline of great fighters is good but some good can come out of such eventualities. Floyd Mayweather Jr. (retired) and Wladimir Klitschko (former heavyweight champ) had been so dominating that they sucked the life out of their divisions and, to some extent, the sport. That might not have been the case if they had exciting fighting styles, perhaps similar to Manny Pacquiao at his peak. They never have. Mayweather and Klitschko have been very effective but largely boring. Now that they're either gone or knocked down a notch we can focus on competitive fights involving more-interesting boxers as we enter 2016. Canelo Alvarez. Gennady Golovkin. Sergey Kovalev. Terence Crawford. Keith Thurman. Deontay Wilder. New No. 1 pound for pound Roman Gonzalez. The list of stars and possible matchups is enticingly long. The sea change at heavyweight is particularly striking. The Klitschkos had a lock on the division for more than a decade, one which not even the most generous among us would say was compelling. Now the traditional glamour division is wide open, with Tyson Fury and Wilder as titleholders and several other interesting big men waiting in the wings. Change isn't always good but it is in this case.



BAD

Manny Pacquiao's decision to fight Tim Bradley on April 9 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas in what he's calling his last fight isn't disastrous. Bradley, No. 10 on THE RING's pound-for-pound list, obviously is a legitimate foil. Still, I don't get it. Everyone seems to agree that the fans would rather see Pacquiao face either Amir Khan or Terence Crawford, perhaps to give them something new if nothing else. The majority of those who were paying attention thought Pacquiao won his first two meetings with Bradley convincingly and neither fight was all that memorable, which might lead fans to ask: "Why do it a third time?" In spite of that, Pacquiao, his team and others involved in the pay-per-view promotion (including HBO and the MGM) decided that Bradley made more sense from a business standpoint. To me, that seems like a conflict – the fans saying one thing, those involved in the fight saying something else. I have tremendous respect for the business acumen of the aforementioned parties. They're in positions to make these decisions because they know what they're doing. I guess I'm just old-fashioned. I would've given the fans what they want, something fresh, intriguing, Khan or Crawford, not something they've already seen twice.

WORSE

I really don't know what to make of apocalyptic comments Tyson Fury made in an interview with the London Daily Mail before he fought Wladimir Klitschko, which were perceived as both homophobic and sexist. He said in part: "There are only three things that need to be accomplished before the devil comes home. One of them is homosexuality being legal in countries, one of them is abortion and the other is pedophilia." And these were far from his first crude comments. Fury said that his most recent thoughts were taken directly from the Bible, which didn't help. Thousands in the U.K. protested his nomination for the BBC Sports Personality of the Year and he faced a possible fine by the British Boxing Board of Control. To his credit, Fury apologized. He said: "I've said a lot of stuff in the past you know and none of it's with intentions to hurt anybody. It's all a bit of tongue in cheek and it's all fun and games for me. I'm not really a serious type of person. Everything's happy-go-lucky with Tyson Fury. If I've said anything in the past that's hurt anybody, I apologize to anyone who's been hurt out there. I never meant to do that." Next step: Watch what you say going forward. What one sees as "fun and games" can be hurtful to others.

RING POLL A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

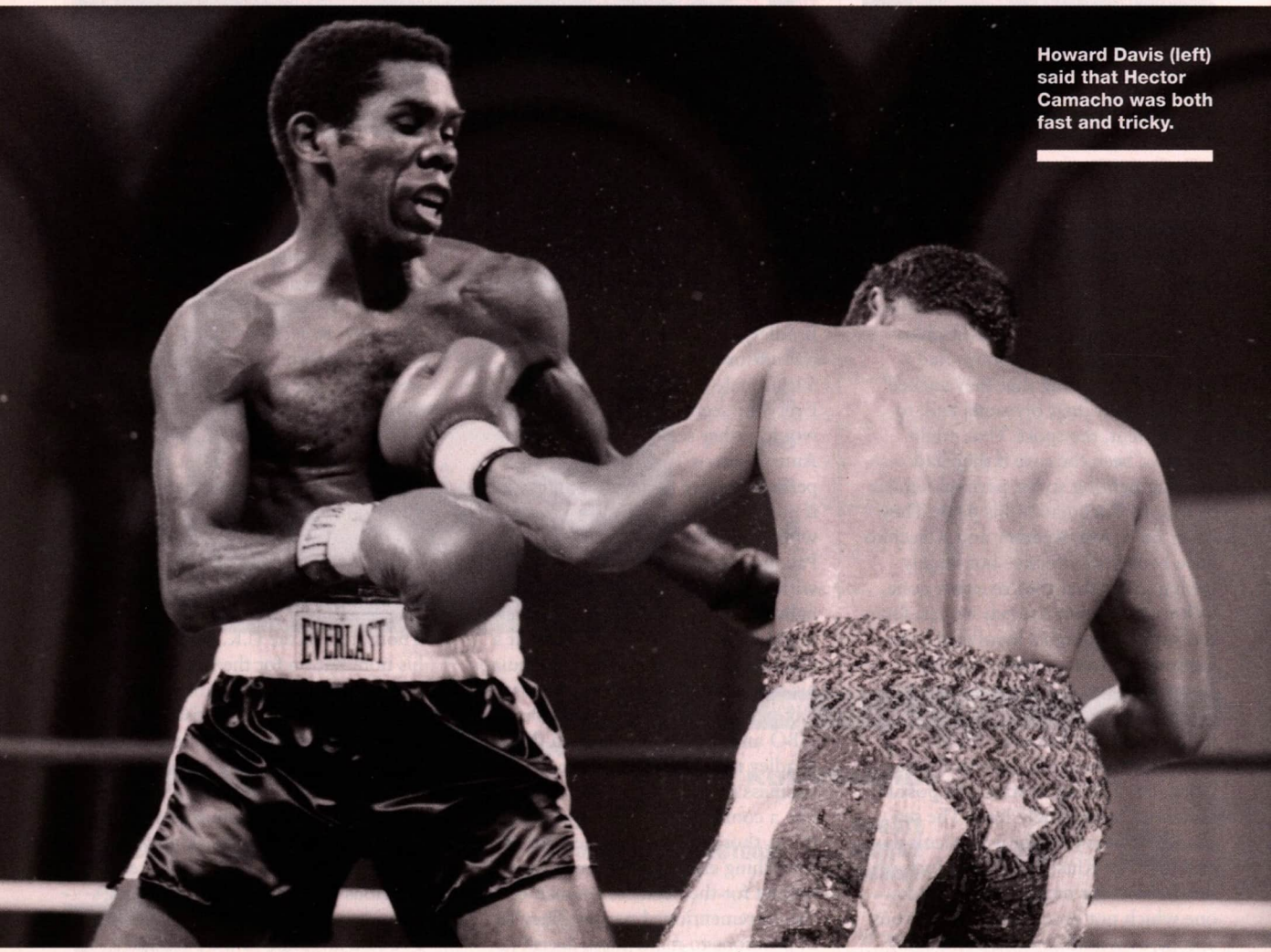
Boxing fans are looking forward to a number of compelling matchups in the new year. Which one is the most intriguing? We asked: **Which fight are you anticipating the most in 2016?** Here is how you responded.

THE PERCENTAGES:

61.77	CANELO ALVAREZ VS. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
22.46	SERGEY KOVALEV VS. ANDRE WARD
6.20	TYSON FURY VS. WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO (REMATCH)
5.68	CARL FRAMPTON VS. SCOTT QUIGG
3.89	KEITH THURMAN VS. SHAWN PORTER

NOTE: 3,806 READERS VOTED

HOWARD DAVIS JR.



Howard Davis (left) said that Hector Camacho was both fast and tricky.

Note: This feature originally appeared on RingTV.com on Jan. 4, 2012. Also, Davis named his toughest fights instead of his best overall opponent, which is normally the final category. Davis died on Dec. 30, 2015.

No debate about the greatest Olympic boxing teams in history would be credible without mentioning the bicentennial squad America sent to Montreal in 1976. The team brought home five gold medals to go along with a silver and bronze.

And while Ray Leonard and the Spinks brothers would go on to be more celebrated as professionals, it was lightweight representative and gold medalist Howard Davis Jr. who took home the prestigious Val Barker Trophy as the best boxer in the Olympics.

Davis didn't exactly walk onto the team. First he had to deal with Thomas Hearns and Aaron Pryor in qualifying, defeating the latter twice by decision to earn – in the truest sense of the word – his place on the team.

The native of Glen Cove, New York, had a respectable pro career as well, remaining a top lightweight and junior welterweight contender for most of 20 years. Three times he would challenge for a world title, coming up just short in his first two attempts – against Jim Watt and Edwin Rosario – before being stopped in the first round by Buddy McGirt late in his career.

Apart from the title bout setbacks, Davis handed Meldrick Taylor his first career blemish with a draw in 1986 and faced other world-class opponents, including Hector Camacho and Vilomar

Fernandez, before he retired for good in 1996 with a record of 36-6-1 (14 knockouts).

Davis enjoyed considerable success outside of the ring as well. While living in Central New Jersey during the 1990s, he discovered a young cruiserweight prospect named Imamu Mayfield and guided him to the IBF cruiserweight title in 1997. In 2003, he relocated to Coconut Creek, Florida, to train mixed martial arts fighters in their striking technique. His best-known MMA pupil? Former UFC light heavyweight champion Chuck Liddell.

Davis reminisced about his career and the fighters who stood out the most from his 43 trips to the professional ring.

FASTEST HANDS

Hector Camacho: I think he had great timing and was great counterpuncher. Not a hard puncher at all and I don't think he cared about punching hard. I caught him a couple of times. I bloodied his nose in the fourth and fifth rounds. He was very tricky but he couldn't do the things he wanted to do to me because I wouldn't let him hit me. But he won the fight, no doubt about it. He didn't shut me out. All the rounds were close in my opinion.

FASTEST FEET

Camacho: He knows how to avoid with his feet. He's not a guy who moves his head a lot, he avoids with his legs.

BEST CHIN

Larry Stanton: I hit him with the kitchen sink. I'm not known to be a hard puncher but I can punch hard when I set down and don't move so much. I never cared about knocking somebody out. My thing was being a mad scientist, taking it to the Bunsen burners and beakers.

STRONGEST

Norman Goins: I was either 20 or 21, he was 27 or 28 and had his man strength. One of the strongest fighters I ever fought. I would have to say (Tony) Baltazar also. I was sick but I could tell he was strong. He was very difficult to clinch.

SMARTEST

Edwin Rosario: You could tell he studied me. He had all my moves. I had to go into my bag of tricks for him. Boxing is a game of chess. I would make a certain move that would be setting something up down the line. He knew I was setting him up for something later so when I made a move, he made a move to counteract it. I had to make two, three moves so I could get him into position.

BEST JAB

Rosario: I think the most I got hit by anyone's jab happened to be Edwin Rosario. It wasn't much but I would say he hit me the most with the jab. If somebody hit me with a lot of jabs, it'd be very difficult for me to get my jab off. ... He saw my jab. Good fighters can figure out when you're going to throw a punch because they study your movements. You could tell he had studied my jab because every time I would throw it, he would either slip it or block it.

BEST PUNCHER

Tony Baltazar: I didn't know anything about him, not even his record. They just told me, "Today you're fighting this guy." I usually make it easy for myself by not getting hit but at times I got hit by him and they were pretty powerful punches. If I wasn't sick, he wouldn't have hit me at all. I was so weak and ill, I don't know how I went 10 rounds because two days before that I couldn't go two."

BEST DEFENSE

Rosario: He was very difficult to hit the first three rounds. One of the things I had going for me was speed and once I find the range for my jab, it's over for them. I could not hit him with my jab in the beginning. When I started feinting, I started hitting him with it. Even with all the movements, he was still difficult to hit for me.

BEST BOXER

Vilomar Fernandez: One of the most technical fighters I ever fought. He was a consummate boxer. Just came off a win over Alexis Arguello. It was an elimination fight to fight for the title. When you think of a slick, high-intelligence boxer, that's what he was about. He was one of those guys who was very smart, very difficult to hit at times. He just had a very high IQ for boxing and I admire that.

TOUGHEST FIGHTS

Stanton and Goins: I was very nervous. It was my first 10-rounder (vs. Stanton). We fought in an arena that had no air conditioning and after the first round I had nothing. I don't know how I went 10 rounds. I almost collapsed after the fight. I had nothing, and when I say I had nothing left, there's no way I could go another round. I felt like I was dying. I tried to KO him in the first round and he just kept coming for 10 rounds. It was the most brutal fight for me, mentally. On top of that I had Bell's palsy. Only my father had known about it. That was painful in itself. I had to deal with that while fighting.

Then my second 10-rounder (was against) Norman Goins. He had a lot of knockouts and he had lost his last seven fights but for some reason when he found out he was fighting me, he hired a new trainer, went to train in Florida and got in terrific shape. He knocked me down in the first and in the fifth. I knocked him down in the ninth and it should have been a knockout. The referee Jay Edson let it go 13 seconds. I came to him afterwards and said, "You let the fight go a little longer." He admitted it, he said, "Yeah, but you had the fight." RING

By **David Greisman**

TIME TO STOP

WAY-PAST-THEIR-PRIME FIGHTERS LIKE **ROY JONES JR.** AND **JAMES TONEY** ARE ONLY DOING DAMAGE TO THEMSELVES

Fighters are at their most delusional at two times in their lives: when their careers are just beginning and when their careers are just about to end.

Nearly everyone thinks he will become a world champion. Very few ever do. And far too many of those who do indeed reach a high level believe they can remain there for far longer than will actually prove to be the case.

There comes a point when they transition from understandably stubborn to undeniably sad. That became the reality for Roy Jones Jr. and James Toney remarkably long ago. That has remained the reality for Jones and Toney for a ridiculous amount of time since.

Toney is still fighting at the age of 47. As of this magazine's press time he had a bout scheduled for late January against some guy only the most hardcore of boxing fans would know, Eric Martel Bahoeli, because Bahoeli once lost to an Australian heavyweight prospect named Lucas Browne. Bahoeli has also suffered defeats against several others far less accomplished than that.

Jones turned 47 this January. If he chooses to fight on in 2016, then it'll be an even bigger mistake than his decision to step in the ring over the past several years.

He went from fooling himself to making a fool of himself, taking on easy touches until he met someone who hit hard — or at least hard enough that this opponent was too hard to handle for a fighter who could no longer handle hard hits.

Enzo Maccarinelli was winning through three rounds when he dropped Jones hard in the fourth. Jones got up, only to be knocked unconscious, falling like an old tree

It has become painful to watch geezers Roy Jones Jr. (previous page) and James Toney (below, on the left) fight.

that was cut down because it was so weak it could barely stand on its own anymore.

This wasn't the first bad knockout loss for Jones but they've gotten progressively worse as he regresses. He was stopped by Antonio Tarver and then laid out by Glen Johnson in 2004. He was defeated on the scorecards against Tarver in 2005 and Joe Calzaghe in 2008. He was done in one against Danny Green in 2009, had way too little to offer while losing a decision to Bernard Hopkins in 2010 and then was put to sleep by Denis Lebedev in the 10th round of their fight in 2011.

Jones should've put his career to bed. Instead he did what he'd previously done after losses, rebuilding against lesser foes. Except this time they were even worse than his past confidence boosters. That was a good thing in that there was little possibility of him getting hurt against them. That was a bad thing, though, in that it gave him a win streak, keeping him around and available for a better fighter who would inevitably take advantage of a boxer who had seen better days.

This is what old legends do. They know their names still carry value. They are like fishermen who float along, patiently seeking nibbles of interest until their target gives in to temptation — and at last they land the big one.

Except they almost always no longer have what it takes to reel in their catch. They are pulled into the deep, perhaps realizing too late that they had lured themselves in, falling for it and failing because of it, hook, line and sinker.

Evander Holyfield eventually gave up at 51 when no one was willing to take advantage of him. Shannon Briggs doesn't have the same star power but the 44-year-old is trying to earn one last shot through talking and stalking. Shane Mosley, also 44, is blaming various injuries for numerous past performances and claiming he can compete again.

Jones believed he had something left to do and enough left to do it. He wanted a cruiserweight title. "If I stopped fighting, could I live the rest of my life knowing I didn't do everything I was put here to do?" he told boxing writer Brin-Jonathan Butler before the Maccarinelli fight. Meanwhile, Butler was told that Jones didn't really run anymore and the writer saw why when watching Jones play basketball, his legs weakening as the games went on. Jones couldn't move like he used to.

He definitely couldn't fight like he used to either. The Maccarinelli bout wasn't for a cruiserweight title. Maccarinelli, a titleholder eight years ago, now couldn't even be considered a contender. He still was better than Jones.

Toney, too, is losing to fighters who couldn't have competed against him before. He has gone from dropping decisions to Samuel Peter in 2006 and 2007 to being shut out by Lebedev in 2011 and losing a wide one to Browne in 2013. Then he came up short against journeyman Jason Gavern later that year and didn't return until August 2015, when he was defeated by a 9-3-1 foe named Charles Ellis.

"I have had over 90 pro fights in my career and not once have I ever been knocked out nor has anybody beaten my ass," he wrote on Facebook before the Ellis fight. "So unless a fighter out there can knock me out, then I don't want to hear anything from anybody. ... Until one man can stop me, I'm going to keep going until I feel like stopping!"

Jones getting knocked out once again and Toney not being able to beat Ellis should've been rock bottom for them. The same thing could've been said for previous defeats yet they somehow sink even lower. Each loss seems more embarrassing than the previous one.

They will still enter the Hall of Fame. But they've now fought on long enough that these chapters of their careers will be more than just an unfortunate conclusion. This is far more regrettable than Sugar Ray Leonard coming back to lose to Terry Norris and then returning one last time to be knocked out by Hector Camacho.

That's not even the worst part. Jones keeps getting knocked out. Toney's speech has been slurred for years. The saddest consequence isn't the damage done to their legacies but rather the damage they're doing to themselves.

VASILY MAXIMOV/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; INSET: SCOTT HEAVEY/GETTY IMAGES

IN GOOD HANDS

PETER NELSON TAKES THE REINS AT HBO SPORTS WITH THE RESPECT OF THOSE WHO KNOW HIM

HBO announced in early December that Peter Nelson would be the new head of HBO Sports.

My role as a consultant for HBO Sports is inconsistent with in-depth analysis of the events that led to this decision but I would like to say a word about Nelson.

I met him eight years ago when he was a freelance writer. I've followed his career closely since he joined HBO in 2011. He is uniquely suited for his new role. I can't think of anyone better qualified to lead HBO Sports through the years ahead. He's smart, hard-working and honest. He appreciates what's best about the HBO culture and brand.

Boxing is still at the core of what HBO Sports does. Nelson is grounded in the sport and business of boxing. During his time at HBO, he has reached out to people at all levels of the boxing community to listen to what they have to say and learn. He's popular within the boxing industry and also within HBO. Because he knows both boxing and the HBO Sports Department personnel, he can

Peter Nelson is suited for his new role as head of HBO Sports.

hit the ground running.

Nelson's task isn't to rebuild what HBO Sports once was. It's to reshape and revitalize HBO Sports and lead it to new heights. That will take time. Most of the Sports Department budget for 2016 has already been committed to specific fighters and projects. There will be complaints as hard choices that encroach upon vested interests are made. It's impossible to make everybody happy in boxing or in television. But with the support of senior management, Nelson has the potential to be an effective, bold, visionary leader who will be good for HBO and good for boxing.

★

Just prior to Gennady Golovkin's fight against David Lemieux at Madison Square Garden, Michael Buffer introduced the most notable celebrities at ringside.

Earlier in the evening, Donald Trump had entered the arena to a near-deafening chorus of boos.

Now, prior to introducing Lennox Lewis, Bernard Hopkins, and Oscar De La Hoya, Buffer bravely intoned, "He's an author, an entrepreneur, a TV star, and the No. 1 Republican contender, Donald Trump!"

The Donald is always "ready to rumble."

There were more boos.

Buffer met Trump in the 1980s when the Trump Taj Mahal, Trump Plaza, and Atlantic City Convention Center hosted big fights on a regular basis. The Donald took a liking to The Michael and insisted on a clause in all boxing contracts requiring that Buffer be the ring announcer for any fight contested at a Trump property. Mark Etess (then president of the Taj Mahal) referred to it as "The Buffer Clause."

If Trump is elected president, one can imagine Buffer jump-starting the inaugural festivities with the proclamation. "Let's Get Ready to Rumble!" But there's no need for the imagination to stop there.

On Oct. 26, Mike Tyson endorsed Trump's candidacy, saying, "He should be president of the United States. That's what he should be. Let's try something new."

Once Trump has the nomination, he could choose Tyson as his running mate. Iron Mike is a resident of Nevada, which is a swing state. It doesn't have as many electoral college votes as Florida or Ohio but in a tight election every vote matters. Also, think of the media coverage that a Trump-Tyson ticket would engender.

If the current crop of presidential candidates falters, other boxing personalities could jump into the fray.

Lou DiBella would make an interesting president, although it's hard to imagine what life would be like with Lou's finger on the nuclear trigger.

If recent performance is any guide, an Al Haymon administration would run a significant financial deficit.

Al Bernstein would fail as a candidate because voters would think he's too nice to be tough on terrorists.

Buffer, by the way, would have a built-in campaign advantage if he ran on the pledge that he'd get our armed forces "ready to rumble."

Meanwhile, all of the candidates could learn something from Bob Arum. If attacked for flip-flopping on crucial issues, they could respond, "Yesterday I was lying. Today I'm telling the truth."

As for presumptive Democratic Party nominee Hillary Clinton, given the outsized role that a few large swing states will play in the election, she might be well-served by choosing Florida resident Roy Jones Jr. as her running mate. Of course, now that Roy is a Russian citizen, that wouldn't play well with some voters. And Kelly Pavlik, from the great swing-state of Ohio, will only be 34 years old on Election Day, leaving him short of the constitutional age requirement.

Wait a minute! I just thought of something. Hillary can choose Don King as her running mate. Don is an Ohio-born Florida resident with homes in both states.

★

Let's give credit where credit is due.

Over the years, I've been a frequent critic of the scorecards turned in by sanctioning body judges. Too often they've reeked of favoritism for the house fighter.

Like many fans, I was skeptical while waiting for the result of Wladimir Klitschko vs. Tyson Fury to be announced. Fury seemed to have won the fight but strange things have happened in Germany, where the bout was contested. And over the years, Klitschko has been a cash machine for the various sanctioning bodies and other organizations that oversee his bouts.

My own scorecard read 115-113 in Fury's favor. Cesar Ramos (115-112), Ramon Cerdan (115-112) and Raul Caiz Sr. (116-111) had similar results. Kudos for the judges.

Meanwhile, Klitschko-Fury has put to rest any lingering doubt as to who would have won a fantasy boxing match between the Klitschko brothers.

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "A Hurting Sport: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing" – was published recently by the University of Arkansas Press.

TRUMP: AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES; NELS BRAD BARKET/GETTY IMAGES FOR HBO LATINO ON:

 By **Brian Harty**

Hector Camacho knew how to make an entrance.

IT'S MACHO TIME!

If boxing in the 1980s and '90s was a party, **Hector "Macho" Camacho** was the life of it, even if he was the guy most likely to be blamed for the cops showing up.

He was no lampshade-wearing clown, though. Camacho could fight his ass off, which is why he'll head up the International Boxing Hall of Fame's class of 2016, it was announced in mid-December. The fashion-fearless Puerto Rican southpaw will be joined by **Hilario Zapata** and **Lupe Pintor** in the Modern category.

It's just a shame Camacho will miss the party; he died in 2012 at the age of 50 after getting shot in San Juan, a passenger in a fast car with a driver holding cocaine. Those symbolic details aside, the showman from Bayamon had such uncommon speed, agility and accuracy in the ring that Sugar Ray Leonard (who chose to face Camacho in an ill-advised comeback in 1997 and was stopped in five rounds) once named him as a possible successor. Those skills were used to win world titles in three divisions and compile a record of 79-6-3 (38 knockouts) against some of the best – including the late Howard Davis Jr., who, in this issue's "Best I Faced" named Camacho's hands and feet as the fastest he ever encountered.

It would've been fun to see "Macho Time" come to Canastota, New York, the site of the Hall. Maybe some attendees can be persuaded to wear a spit curl in Camacho's honor.

Zapata was also a southpaw with limited power but superlative talent. The Panamanian wore belts at 108 and 112 pounds in the '80s and fought an astonishing 303 rounds overall in world-title fights, in which his record was 18-4-1. He was a true road warrior, fighting in 11 countries throughout his career.

Pintor was involved in what THE RING called the junior featherweight Fight of the Decade, a world-title war against Wilfredo Gomez in 1982. Pintor lost by 14th-round TKO but it was just one terrific battle in the consummate Mexican brawler's career, which also included a title-winning victory (albeit a controversial one) over Carlos Zarate in 1979.

Joining Camacho, Zapata and Pintor in the Class of 2016 will be **Harold Lederman**, who began his career as a judge in 1967, long before his interjections as "unofficial ringside scorer" became a beloved mainstay of HBO broadcasts. Iconic commentator **Col. Bob Sheridan**, who called such fights as the Rumble in the Jungle and the Thrilla in Manila, will also be inducted, as will former Nevada State Athletic Commission Executive Director **Marc Ratner** and prolific journalist/author **Jerry Izenberg**, whose influential sports column in the Newark Star Ledger ran for 45 years.

Posthumous inductees will be **Petey Sarron** in the Old-Timer category and trainer **Whitey Esneault** in the Non-Participant category.

Remember in 2002 when Arturo Gatti and Micky Ward fought for the first time? That happened three years after **Ike Ibeabuchi** fought for the *last* time. Now it looks as if the heavyweight from Nigeria, whose wins against David Tua and Chris Byrd in the late '90s prompted many to call him the next big big man, intends to make a comeback.

Ibeabuchi's 20-0 career was "interrupted" when he went to prison for battery and attempted sexual assault charges filed in 1999. He was released in 2014 but then spent almost two more years in custody at a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in Arizona. This was by no means the first crime he had been accused of and, in fact, the landscape of his mind and its stability was a frequent topic of speculation in his heyday.

Ibeabuchi reportedly earned a couple of Associate degrees in prison and insists he's in shape and ready to go. Very ready, according to his new adviser, Michael Koncz, who also works with Manny Pacquiao. Koncz said it's possible Ibeabuchi, 43 in February, could fight on the undercard of Pacquiao's rubber match with Tim Bradley on April 9.

Amateur boxer Cam F. Awesome, as quoted by the Kansas City Star: "All I want to do is love, be loved and punch people in the face." RING

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KNOWING WHEN TO SAY WHEN

THE PROCESS OF DETERMINING THE RIGHT TIME TO HANG 'EM UP IS TRICKY

This is one in a series of columns by future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins, who – through contributor Joseph Santoliquito – gives us his thoughts on various subjects important to every boxer and fan.

It's a question that every fighter, from the club level to the pay-per-view giant, asks himself a million times and it's a question I've been asked myself about a million times: When does a fighter know that they've reached the end of their boxing career?

Knowing when to retire depends on an individual's circumstances. Every fighter is different. History has

JOHN LAMPARSKI/GETTY IMAGES; INSET: JASON MERRITT/GETTY IMAGES FOR UNIVERSAL MUSIC

Bernard Hopkins and Floyd Mayweather Jr. (right, with buddy Justin Bieber) have things to do after fighting.

shown that I certainly am. I was supposed to be finished a thousand times but I knew what my body was telling me. In a fighter's head and in their heart, they think they can go on forever. That will never change.

It's like a civil war breaks out in your body. Your knees and your joints all tell you one thing, to get out, quit, because you can't go anymore. Then you have your heart and your head and they're saying, 'Forget what your knees and your hands and joints are saying, you can still beat the world's best,' and you start making excuses for yourself.

In the end, nothing defeats time. I turned 51 on Jan. 15, and I know I can beat almost anyone at 175 pounds in the world. But I have faced reality that I can't beat everyone in the world at 175 pounds right now.

When you're a fighter, you believe you're invincible. All fighters think that way. It doesn't matter who you are. When you get older, or when you can't get out of the way of a punch like you used to, you have to retrain the way you think.

It's a hard process. It's a very tricky time.

Think about it. Floyd Mayweather can still fight. But something inside told him that was it after he beat Andre Berto. I know a lot of boxing people think Floyd will come back but, to be honest with you, I don't think he's coming back.

We don't know how hard it's been for Floyd to get ready for training camp the last 10 years. People on the outside don't know how much work Floyd puts into each camp. He's addicted to conditioning. He loves it. So do I.

It's why Floyd has been the best for so long. But he's also been boxing his whole life. All those training camps, all of that running and conditioning, takes a toll on a fighter. You're fighting 10 fights in training camp to prepare for one real fight.

Floyd is the perfect example. He may have a tough time getting up in the morning. Who knows? We don't see the pain he's going through. It's also very mental. How often can you get yourself up to train?

When you lose that desire, that's a great time to say, 'That's it.'

Believe it or not, it's also the media that makes the decision when it's time for most of us. When the media says you're done, for the most part, you're done. You can look like trash in one fight and the media writes that no one wants to see you fight anymore. Most guys will read that and it tells them to get out.

The media can convince a fighter he's done because they see things the fighter can't see himself. The fighter has to read about how bad he looked. They have to see it on replay. Guys get knocked out and have excuses that this, this, and this happened. They don't think they lost because they believe in the excuses that they've made up.

But when someone else sees a world champion slipping, like Wladimir Klitschko against Tyson Fury, that says the end is near – if not the end is here.

A fighter doesn't keep score on how they feel and what they look like. In Klitschko's mind, he may have thought he fought OK against Fury. The rest of the world saw something different. I guarantee you he didn't see himself that way.

Do you think Fury would have lasted 12 rounds with Klitschko 10 years ago or even five years ago? I have my doubts.

You have to listen to your body and have to look at where you are in your life. I'm ready to go. I have a promotional career with Golden Boy and a broadcast career ahead of me. Manny Pacquiao has his political career ahead of him after he retires. Floyd wants to get into promoting and working with fighters, and Klitschko may follow his brother into politics.

There is life after boxing. It just helps having an exit strategy when the end comes.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

TYSON FURY

By **Michael Rosenthal**

CHRIS BRINSKILL

Who else?

We've written quite a bit about Tyson Fury's stunning victory over Wladimir Klitschko on Nov. 28 elsewhere in this issue. So we'll fill this space with nuggets that demonstrate the historic nature of Fury's triumph.

- Klitschko had won 22 consecutive fights over 11 years before falling to Fury, barely losing a round along the way.
- Klitschko entered the fight with 18 consecutive successful title defenses, one shy of tying Larry Holmes for No. 2 on the all-time list among heavyweights. Klitschko had 23 successful defenses over two reigns.
- Klitschko entered the fight with a record of 25-2 in world title fights.
- Fury became only the third British fighter universally recognized as heavyweight champion in modern history, after Bob Fitzsimmons and Lennox Lewis.
- Fury became the seventh British fighter to hold a world heavyweight title, after Fitzsimmons, Lewis, Herbie Hide, Frank Bruno, Henry Akinwande and David Haye.
- Fury became the first fighter to outpoint Klitschko, winning easily 115-112, 116-111 and 115-112.
- Klitschko, a future Hall of Famer and reigning heavyweight champion with vaunted power, landed a mindboggling 1.5 power shots per round, according to CompuBox.

We could go on but you get the picture. This was a monumental victory for Fury, who left the ring with the RING, IBF, WBA and WBO titles and a special place in boxing history.

CHRIS BRUNSKILL

POUND FOR POUND: Heavyweight Tyson Fury (unrated) exhausted all the synonyms for "stunning" with his victory over Wladimir Klitschko (No. 6 at the time) in Germany. Klitschko exited the list and the resulting space at No. 10 was taken by American welterweight Tim Bradley.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Fury (No. 3 last month) strapped on the RING championship belt while Klitschko dropped to No. 1 contender status, thus pushing Alexander Povetkin and Deontay Wilder down to the Nos. 2 and 3 spots. Anthony Joshua (No. 10 last month) moved up a notch after knocking out Dillian Whyte (unrated) in seven rounds but then returned to No. 10 the following week when Cuba's Luis Ortiz entered at No. 5. Ortiz's victim, Bryant Jennings, dropped from No. 5 to No. 8 and Cameroon's Carlos Takam (No. 10 at the time) was ousted.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No change.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Eleider Alvarez (No. 6 last month) rose to No. 5 after a majority decision over Isaac Chilemba, who held his position at No. 7. Undefeated Ukrainian Vyacheslav Shabranskyy then beat Cuban Yunieski Gonzalez and replaced him at No. 10.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Daniel Jacobs (No. 6 last month) leaped to No. 2 after needing just 95 seconds to jack up a thoroughly shocked Peter Quillin, who dropped from No. 3 into Jacobs' old spot at No. 6. Two weeks later Billy Joe Saunders (No. 4 last month) rose a notch after winning his much-anticipated contest with Andy Lee by majority decision. Lee lost his title and slipped from No. 3 to No. 5.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Chris Eubank Jr. rose from No. 9 to No. 8 after stopping Gary O'Sullivan (unrated) in seven rounds. Argentine Diego Chaves (No. 7 last month) has been inactive since his draw with Tim Bradley in December 2014 so he was dropped and No. 10 was filled by undefeated Russian Dmitry Mikhaylenko.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: In a runner-up for this year's Upset of the Year award, Amir Imam (No. 8 last month) was stopped in the eighth round by unrated Adrian Granados. Imam dropped out and undefeated Russian Eduard Troyanovsky entered at No. 10.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: The U.K.'s Kevin Mitchell (No. 8 last month) left the list after he was stopped in five rounds by unrated Ismael Barroso. Those previously below Mitchell moved up and the vacancy at No. 10 was filled by undefeated Puerto Rican Felix Verdejo. Verdejo's stay was brief, as Cuba's Rances Barthelemy returned to the ratings at No. 7 after outpointing Denis Shafikov, who dropped from No. 3 to No. 8.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Japan's Rikki Naito (No. 9 last month) left the ratings after he lost a technical decision to unrated Kenichi Ogawa. Undefeated Jamaican Nicholas Walters, who moved up from featherweight with a majority draw against Jason Sosa (unrated), came in at No. 10.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Walters' departure from the No. 1 spot elevated everyone and created a void at No. 10, which was filled by Japanese contender Satoshi Hosono. Hosono then moved up a spot after a split-decision win over Akifumi Shimoda (unrated).

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No change.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Filipino Marlon Tapales replaced Rau'shee Warren at No. 10 after scoring a second-round knockout of Shohei Omori (unrated) in Japan.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No change.

FLYWEIGHTS: Kazuto Ioka climbed from No. 4 to No. 3 after stopping Juan Carlos Reveco, who fell from No. 5 to No. 7.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Pedro Guevara plunged from No. 1 to No. 6 after a split-decision loss to Japan's Yu Kimura, who entered the ratings at No. 5. This pushed Filipino Jonathan Taconing (No. 10 last month) off the list. Moises Fuentes (unrated last month) then took the No. 10 spot from fellow Mexican Francisco Rodriguez after beating him by split decision. Akira Yaegashi (unrated last month) then stormed into the ratings at No. 5 after a unanimous-decision victory over Javier Mendoza, who was dropped from No. 2 to No. 6. At the same time, Mexican Raul Garcia (No. 5 last month) was removed for inactivity.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Katsunari Takayama (No. 2 last month) lost a technical decision and his title to previously unrated Mexican Jose Argumedo, who entered the list at No. 5. Takayama dropped to No. 6 and Thailand's Fahlan Sakkreerin fell out of the ratings.

Bryant Jennings (right) evidently had a difficult time coping with his fate – a knockout loss – against Luis Ortiz on Dec. 19.

THE FIGURES UNDER THE FIGHTERS' NAMES INDICATE: WEEKS IN THE RATINGS • COUNTRY • RECORD

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C TYSON FURY
203 • U.K. • 25-0-0 (18 KOs)

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
555 • Ukraine • 64-4-0 (53 KOs)
2. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
429 • Russia • 30-1-0 (22 KOs)
3. **DEONTAY WILDER**
113 • U.S. • 35-0-0 (34 KOs)
4. **KUBRAT PULEV**
221 • Bulgaria • 21-1-0 (11 KOs)
5. **LUIS ORTIZ**
3 • Cuba • 24-0-0 (21 KOs)
6. **BERMANE STIVERNE**
143 • Canada • 25-2-1 (21 KOs)
7. **VYACHESLAV GLAZKOV**
95 • Ukraine • 21-0-1 (13 KOs)
8. **BRYANT JENNINGS**
94 • U.S. • 19-2-0 (10 KOs)
9. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
60 • Uzbek. • 33-2-1 (25 KOs)
10. **ANTHONY JOSHUA**
10 • U.K. • • 15-0-0 (15 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **GRIGORY DROZD**
118 • Russia • 40-1-0 (28 KOs)
2. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
310 • Russia • 28-2-0 (21 KOs)
3. **KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI**
21 • Poland • 25-0-0 (16 KOs)
4. **MARCO HUCK**
159 • Germany • 38-3-1 (26 KOs)
5. **ILUNGA MAKABU**
130 • Congo • 19-1-0 (18 KOs)
6. **FIRAT ARSLAN**
166 • Germany • 36-8-2 (22 KOs)
7. **YOURI KALENGA**
81 • Congo • 22-2-0 (15 KOs)
8. **OLEKSANDR USYK**
14 • Ukraine • 9-0-0 (9 KOs)
9. **VICTOR RAMIREZ**
9 • Argentina • 22-2-1 (17 KOs)
10. **OLA AFOLABI**
9 • U.K. • 22-4-4 (11 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **SERGEY KOVALEV**
155 • Russia • 28-0-1 (25 KOs)
2. **ADONIS STEVENSON**
135 • Canada • 27-1-0 (22 KOs)
3. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
501 • U.S. • 55-7-2 (32 KOs)
4. **JEAN PASCAL**
130 • Canada • 30-3-1 (17 KOs)
5. **ELEIDER ALVAREZ**
95 • Colombia • 19-0-0 (10 KOs)
6. **JUERGEN BRAEHMER**
184 • Germany • 47-2-0 (35 KOs)
7. **ISAAC CHILEMBA**
193 • Malawi • 24-3-2 (10 KOs)
8. **ANDRZEJ FONFARA**
86 • Poland • 28-3-0 (16 KOs)
9. **ARTUR BETERBIEV**
56 • Russia • 9-0-0 (9 KOs)
10. **VYACHESLAV SHABRANSKYY**
3 • Ukraine • 15-0-0 (12 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
326 • Armenia • 44-4-0 (29 KOs)
2. **JAMES DEGALE**
135 • U.K. • 22-1-0 (14 KOs)
3. **BADOU JACK**
37 • Sweden • 20-1-1 (12 KOs)
4. **GILBERTO RAMIREZ**
78 • Mexico • 33-0-0 (24 KOs)
5. **ANDRE DIRRELL**
71 • U.S. • 24-2-0 (16 KOs)
6. **GEORGE GROVES**
213 • U.K. • 21-3-0 (16 KOs)
7. **ANTHONY DIRRELL**
73 • U.S. • 28-1-1 (22 KOs)
8. **FEDOR CHUDINOV**
35 • Russia • 14-0-0 (10 KOs)
9. **CALLUM SMITH**
31 • U.K. • 18-0-0 (13 KOs)
10. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
334 • Russia • 48-5-1 (28 KOs)

MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C CANELO ALVAREZ
7 • Mexico • 46-1-1 (32 KOs)

1. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
213 • Kaz. • 34-0-0 (31 KOs)

2. DANIEL JACOBS
56 • U.S. • 31-1-0 (28 KOs)

3. BILLY JOE SAUNDERS
58 • U.K. • 23-0-0 (12 KOs)

4. DAVID LEMIEUX
32 • Canada • 34-3-0 (31 KOs)

5. ANDY LEE
56 • Ireland • 34-3-1 (24 KOs)

6. PETER QUILLIN
188 • U.S. • 32-1-1 (23 KOs)

7. HASSAN N'DAM
103 • Cameroon • 31-2-0 (18 KOs)

8. CHRIS EUBANK JR.
39 • U.K. • 21-1-0 (16 KOs)

9. DANIEL GEALE
343 • Australia • 31-4-0 (16 KOs)

10. MICHEL SORO
28 • France • 27-1-1 (17 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. ERISLANDY LARA
236 • Cuba • 22-2-2 (13 KOs)

2. AUSTIN TROUT
188 • U.S. • 30-2-0 (17 KOs)

3. MIGUEL COTTO
7 • P.R. • 40-5-0 (33 KOs)

4. JERMELL CHARLO
113 • U.S. • 27-0-0 (12 KOs)

5. JERMALL CHARLO
82 • U.S. • 23-0-0 (18 KOs)

6. DEMETRIUS ANDRADE
12 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (15 KOs)

7. VANES MARTIROSYAN
318 • U.S. • 36-2-1 (21 KOs)

8. JULIAN WILLIAMS
56 • U.S. • 21-0-1 (13 KOs)

9. LIAM SMITH
17 • U.K. • 22-0-1 (12 KOs)

10. CARLOS MOLINA
236 • Mexico • 23-6-2 (7 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. KELL BROOK
246 • U.K. • 35-0-0 (24 KOs)

2. MANNY PACQUIAO
222 • Phil. • 57-6-2 (38 KOs)

3. AMIR KHAN
88 • U.K. • 31-3-0 (19 KOs)

4. TIM BRADLEY
187 • U.S. • 33-1-1 (13 KOs)

5. KEITH THURMAN
148 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (22 KOs)

6. SHAWN PORTER
109 • U.S. • 26-1-1 (16 KOs)

7. SADAM ALI
34 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (13 KOs)

8. DANNY GARCIA
23 • U.S. • 31-0-0 (18 KOs)

9. ERROL SPENCE
14 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (16 KOs)

10. DMITRY MIKHAYLENKO
1 • Russia • 20-0-0 (9 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. VIKTOR POSTOL
125 • Ukraine • 28-0-0 (12 KOs)

2. TERENCE CRAWFORD
38 • U.S. • 27-0-0 (19 KOs)

3. RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV
161 • Russia • 25-4-0 (18 KOs)

4. LUCAS MATTHYSSE
248 • Argentina • 37-4-0 (34 KOs)

5. ADRIEN BRONER
88 • U.S. • 31-2-0 (23 KOs)

6. JESSIE VARGAS
91 • U.S. • 26-1-0 (9 KOs)

7. MAURICIO HERRERA
50 • U.S. • 22-5-0 (7 KOs)

8. JOSE BENAVIDEZ
39 • U.S. • 24-0-0 (16 KOs)

9. ANTONIO OROZCO
14 • U.S. • 23-0-0 (15 KOs)

10. EDUARD TROYANOVSKY
6 • Russia • 23-0-0 (20 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. JORGE LINARES
96 • Venezuela • 40-3-0 (27 KOs)

2. DEJAN ZLATICANIN
39 • Montenegro • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)

3. SHARIF BOGERE
62 • Uganda • 27-1-0 (19 KOs)

4. RICHARD COMMEY
32 • Ghana • 23-0-0 (21 KOs)

5. TERRY FLANAGAN
13 • U.K. • 29-0-0 (12 KOs)

6. ANTHONY CROLLA
11 • U.K. • 30-4-3 (12 KOs)

7. RANCES BARTHELEMY
3 • Cuba • 24-0-0 (13 KOs)

8. DENIS SHAFIKOV
39 • Russia • 36-2-1 (19 KOs)

9. ARGENIS MENDEZ
13 • Dom. Rep. • 23-3-1 (12 KOs)

10. MIGUEL VAZQUEZ
283 • Mexico • 35-5-0 (13 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
314 • Japan • 24-0-1 (20 KOs)

2. FRANCISCO VARGAS
78 • Mexico • 23-0-1 (17 KOs)

3. TAKASHI MIURA
144 • Japan • 29-3-2 (22 KOs)

4. ORLANDO SALIDO
68 • Mexico • 43-13 -3 (30 KOs)

5. ROMAN MARTINEZ
383 • P.R. • 29-2-3 (17 KOs)

6. JAVIER FORTUNA
62 • Dom. Rep. • 29-0-1 (21 KOs)

7. JOSE PEDRAZA
51 • P.R. • 21-0-0 (12 KOs)

8. BRYAN VASQUEZ
56 • Costa Rica • 34-2-0 (18 KOs)

9. SAUL RODRIGUEZ
7 • U.S. • 19-0-1 (14 KOs)

10. NICHOLAS WALTERS
3 • Jamaica • 26-0-1 (21 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. VASYL LOMACHENKO
88 • Ukraine • 5-1-0 (3 KO)

2. GARY RUSSELL JR.
41 • U.S. • 26-1-0 (15 KOs)

3. LEO SANTA CRUZ
19 • U.S. • 31-0-1 (17 KOs)

4. LEE SELBY
95 • U.K. • 22-1-0 (8 KOs)

5. ABNER MARES
140 • Mexico • 29-2-1 (15 KOs)

6. SIMPIWE VETYEKA
109 • S. Africa • 28-3-0 (17 KOs)

7. EVGENY GRADOVICH
149 • Russia • 20-1-1 (9 KOs)

8. JESUS CUELLAR
65 • Argentina • 28-1-0 (21 KOs)

9. SATOSHI HOSONO
3 • Japan • 30-2-1 (20 KOs)

10. RONNY RIOS
7 • U.S. • 25-1-0 (10 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
270 • Cuba • 16-0-0 (10 KOs)

1. SCOTT QUIGG
163 • U.K. • 31-0-2 (23 KOs)

2. CARL FRAMPTON
172 • U.K. • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)

3. NONITO DONAIRE
41 • Phil. • 36-3-0 (23 KOs)

4. GENESIS SERVANIA
95 • Phil. • 27-0-0 (11 KOs)

5. SHINGO WAKE
59 • Japan • 19-4-2 (11 KOs)

6. ALBERT PAGARA
53 • Phil. • 25-0-0 (18 KOs)

7. REY VARGAS
56 • Mexico • 25-0-0 (20 KOs)

8. JESSIE MAGDALENO
30 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (16 KOs)

9. JULIO CEJA
19 • Mexico • 30-1-0 (27 KOs)

10. MANUEL AVILA
19 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (8 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING'S Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another. 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders choose not to fight one another and No. 1 fights No. 3, that matchup could be for the RING title if the Editorial Board deems No. 3 worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months, although injuries and certain other unforeseen circumstances could be taken into consideration; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his champion weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-10 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Editorial Board considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world and then decides collectively what changes will be made. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

RING RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
218 • Japan • 24-0-2 (17 KOs)
2. **JUAN CARLOS PAYANO**
67 • Dom. Rep. • 17-0-0 (8 KOs)
3. **ANSELMO MORENO**
406 • Panama • 35-4-1 (12 KOs)
4. **JAMIE MCDONNELL**
138 • U.K. • 27-2-1 (12 KOs)
5. **TOMOKI KAMEDA**
127 • Japan • 31-2-0 (19 KOs)
6. **RANDY CABALLERO**
63 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (13 KOs)
7. **LEE HASKINS**
30 • U.K. • 32-3-0 (14 KOs)
8. **SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI**
25 • Thailand • 46-6-1 (23 KOs)
9. **PUNGLUANG SOR SINGYU**
16 • Thailand • 51-3-0 (35 KOs)
10. **MARLON TAPALES**
3 • Phil. • 28-2-0 (11 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **NAOYA INOUE**
53 • Japan • 9-0-0 (8 KOs)
2. **CARLOS CUADRAS**
191 • Mexico • 34-0-1 (26 KOs)
3. **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**
140 • Thailand • 37-4-1 (34 KOs)
4. **ZOLANI TETE**
110 • S. Africa • 22-3-0 (18 KOs)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
296 • Argentina • 44-2-2 (23 KOs)
6. **MCJOE ARROYO**
82 • P.R. • 17-0-0 (8 KOs)
7. **KOHEI KONO**
12 • Japan • 31-8-1 (13 KOs)
8. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
171 • Thailand • 58-1-1 (23 KOs)
9. **ARTHUR VILLANUEVA**
142 • Phil. • 28-1-0 (14 KOs)
10. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
16 • Panama • 34-4-0 (24 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C ROMAN GONZALEZ
113 • Nicaragua • 44-0-0 (38 KOs)

1. **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA**
144 • Mexico • 33-2-0 (24 KOs)
2. **AMNAT RUENROENG**
87 • Thailand • 17-0-0 (5 KOs)
3. **KAZUTO IOKA**
68 • Japan • 19-1-0 (10 KOs)
4. **BRIAN VILORIA**
235 • U.S. • 36-5-0 (22 KOs)
5. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
95 • S. Africa • 32-2-0 (21 KOs)
6. **EDGAR SOSA**
191 • Mexico • 51-9-0 (30 KOs)
7. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
223 • Argentina • 36-3-0 (19 KOs)
8. **MCWILLIAMS ARROYO**
70 • P.R. • 16-2-0 (14 KOs)
9. **NAWAPHON POR CHOKCHAI**
28 • Thailand • 31-0-0 (24 KOs)
10. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
13 • Phil. • 21-3-0 (13 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C DONNIE NIETES
222 • Phil. • 37-1-4 (21 KOs)

1. **RYOICHI TAGUCHI**
56 • Japan • 23-2-1 (10 KOs)
2. **RANDY PETALCORIN**
87 • Phil. • 23-1-1 (18 KOs)
3. **YU KIMURA**
6 • Japan • 18-2-1 (3 KOs)
4. **PEDRO GUEVARA**
145 • Mexico • 26-2-1 (17 KOs)
5. **AKIRA YAEGASHI**
1 • Japan • 23-5-0 (12 KOs)
6. **JAVIER MENDOZA**
39 • Mexico • 24-3-1 (19 KOs)
7. **MILAN MELINDO**
60 • Phil. • 33-2-0 (12 KOs)
8. **ALBERTO ROSSEL**
141 • Peru • 34-9-0 (13 KOs)
9. **REY LORETO**
39 • Phil. • 20-13-0 (12 KOs)
10. **MOISES FUENTES**
5 • Mexico • 23-2-1 (12 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **HEKKIE BUDLER**
172 • S. Africa • 29-1-0 (9 KOs)
2. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
238 • Thailand • 40-0-0 (15 KOs)
3. **KOSEI TANAKA**
62 • Japan • 6-0-0 (3 KOs)
4. **KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART**
66 • Thailand • 11-0-0 (6 KOs)
5. **JOSE ARGUMEDO**
1 • Mexico • 16-3-1 (9 KOs)
6. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
145 • Japan • 30-8-0 (12 KOs)
7. **CARLOS BUITRAGO**
169 • Nicaragua • 28-1-1 (16 KOs)
8. **CHAO ZHONG XIONG**
60 • China • 26-6-1 (14 KOs)
9. **DENVER CUELLO**
60 • Phil. • 36-5-6 (24 KOs)
10. **JESUS SILVESTRE**
24 • Mexico • 31-6-0 (22 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
83 • Nicaragua • 44-0-0 (38 KOs)
2. **SERGEY KOVALEV**
43 • Russia • 28-0-1 (25 KOs)
3. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
47 • Kazakhstan • 34-0-0 (31 KOs)
4. **ANDRE WARD**
17 • U.S. • 28-0-0 (15 KOs)
5. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
124 • Cuba • 16-0-0 (10 KOs)
6. **TERENCE CRAWFORD**
36 • U.S. • 27-0-0 (19 KOs)
7. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
632 • Philippines • 57-6-2 (38 KOs)
8. **CANELO ALVAREZ**
7 • Mexico • 46-1-1 (32 KOs)
9. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
33 • Japan • 24-0-2 (17 KOs)
10. **TIM BRADLEY**
6 • U.S. • 33-1-1 (13 KOs)

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

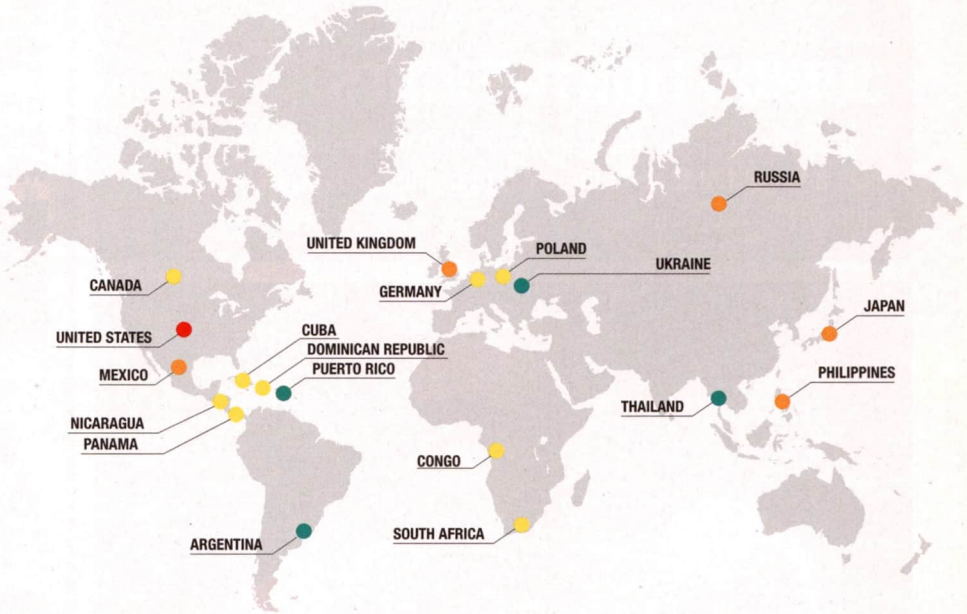
A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

●	UNITED STATES	33	↓ 2
●	UNITED KINGDOM	18	↓ 1
●	MEXICO	17	
●	JAPAN	14	↑ 2
●	PHILIPPINES	12	
●	RUSSIA	12	↑ 2
●	THAILAND	8	↓ 1
●	UKRAINE	6	↑ 1
●	ARGENTINA	5	↓ 1
●	PUERTO RICO	5	
●	CANADA	4	
●	CUBA	4	↑ 1
●	SOUTH AFRICA	4	
●	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	3	
●	GERMANY	3	
●	CONGO	2	
●	NICARAGUA	2	
●	PANAMA	2	
●	POLAND	2	
●	ARMENIA	1	
●	AUSTRALIA	1	
●	BULGARIA	1	
●	CAMEROON	1	↓ 1
●	CHINA	1	
●	COLOMBIA	1	
●	COSTA RICA	1	
●	FRANCE	1	
●	GHANA	1	
●	IRELAND	1	
●	JAMAICA	1	
●	KAZAKHSTAN	1	
●	MALAWI	1	
●	MONTENEGRO	1	
●	PERU	1	
●	SWEDEN	1	
●	UGANDA	1	
●	UZBEKISTAN	1	
●	VENEZUELA	1	

Countries out (from last month): None

Countries in: None



● 30 OR MORE ● 20 - 29 ● 10 - 19 ● 5 - 9 ● 2 - 4

JAPAN VS. PHILIPPINES

The battle of Asia remains tight, with Japan leading rival Philippines by only two rated fighters. Here's a look at the numbers by division:

DIVISION	JAPAN	PHIL.
HEAVYWEIGHTS	0	0
CRUISERWEIGHTS	0	0
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	0	0
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	0	0
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	0	0
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	0	0
WELTERWEIGHTS	0	1
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	0	0
LIGHTWEIGHTS	0	0
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	2	0
FEATHERWEIGHTS	1	0
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	1	3
BANTAMWEIGHTS	2	1
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	2	1
FLYWEIGHTS	1	1
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	3	4
STRAWWEIGHTS	2	1
TOTAL	14	12

NOT A LOST CAUSE

Prevailing wisdom is that a key loss can sink a promising career these days, which is sometimes the case. At the same time, a number of fighters rated by THE RING have demonstrated that setbacks don't necessarily derail a talented fighter. Here are the rated fighters with the most losses:

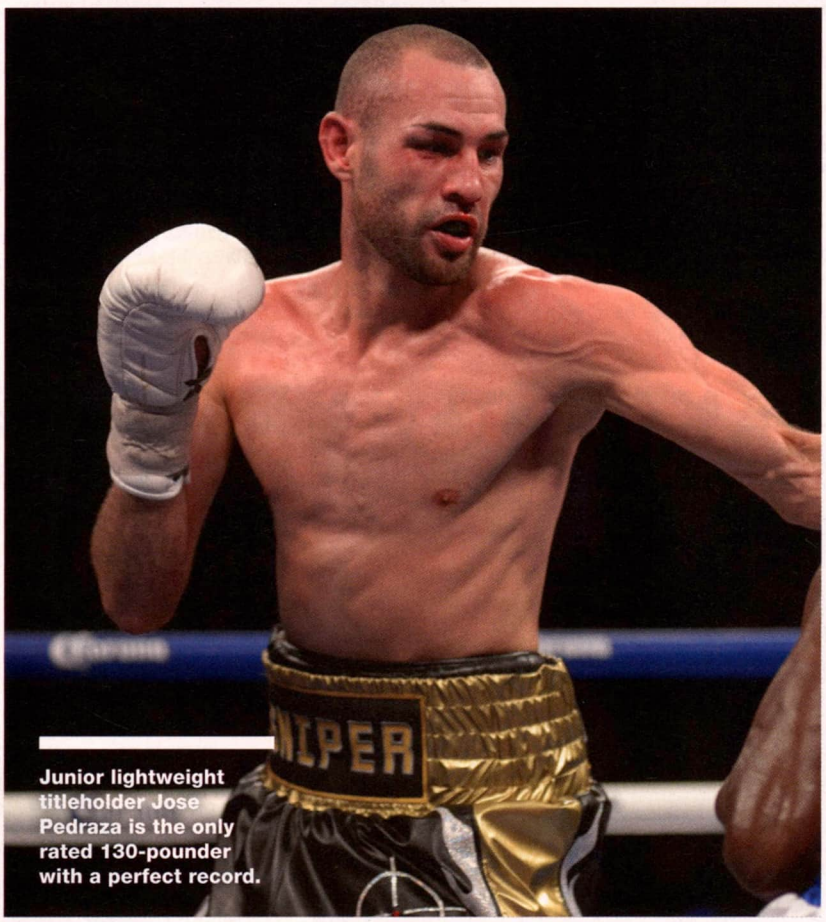
- 13 – **REY LORETO, PHILIPPINES,** JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT »
- 13 – **ORLANDO SALIDO, MEXICO,** JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT
- 9 – **ALBERTO ROSSEL, PERU,** JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT
- 9 – **EDGAR SOSA, MEXICO,** FLYWEIGHT
- 8 – **FIRAT ARSLAN, GERMANY,** CRUISERWEIGHT
- 8 – **KOHEI KONO, JAPAN,** JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT
- 8 – **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA, JAPAN,** STRAWWEIGHT
- 7 – **BERNARD HOPKINS, U.S.,** LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT
- 6 – **CHAO ZHONG XIONG, CHINA,** STRAWWEIGHT
- 6 – **CARLOS MOLINA, MEXICO,** JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT
- 6 – **MANNY PACQUIAO, PHILIPPINES,** WELTERWEIGHT
- 6 – **SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI, THAILAND,** BANTAMWEIGHT
- 6 – **JESUS SILVESTRE, MEXICO,** STRAWWEIGHT

KOVALEV/RICHARD WOLOWICZ

FOCUS ON . . .

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the 130-pounders.



Junior lightweight titleholder Jose Pedraza is the only rated 130-pounder with a perfect record.

MOST WEEKS RATED: ROMAN MARTINEZ **383**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: NICHOLAS WALTERS **3**

OLDEST: TAKASHI UCHIYAMA **36**

YOUNGEST: SAUL RODRIGUEZ **22**

MOST FIGHTS: ORLANDO SALIDO **59**

FEWEST FIGHTS: RODRIGUEZ **20**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: JOSE PEDRAZA **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: SALIDO **72.9 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: SALIDO **30**

FEWEST KOS: PEDRAZA **12**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: PEDRAZA **21 FIGHTS**

ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: NONE

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: MARTINEZ (WBO), PEDRAZA (IBF), UCHIYAMA (WBA), FRANCISCO VARGAS (WBC)

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): JEZREEL CORRALES, RIKKI NAITO, STEPHEN SMITH, OSCAR VALDEZ, LIAM WALSH

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.

Takashi Uchiyama

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: TYSON FURY
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: KELL BROOK
LIGHTWEIGHT: TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

DOUG FISCHER RINGTV.COM EDITOR

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BRIAN HARTY RING MAGAZINE MANAGING EDITOR

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LIGHTWEIGHT: TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: NAOYA INOUE
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

PEDRAZA: DYLAN BUELL/GETTY IMAGES; UCHIYAMA: TURO YAMANAKA

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THE BEST OF 2015

PROPHECY FULFILLED

TYSON FURY ALWAYS SAID HE'D BE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD

By **Elliot Worsell**

"My foot is killing me," moans the new heavyweight champion of the world. "My foot is bloody killing me." He sits shirtless on a bench wearing skin-tight black boxer shorts and, where he's hunched, a ripple of fat rests just above the waistband. It's a reminder, to me at least, that some have previously criticized his physical condition and fitness, and that some have even viewed him as just a pretender, a man whose acid tongue far outweighs his talent. But those same people were left eating their words on Nov. 28, 2015, as Tyson Fury, a considerable underdog from England, outboxed then-world heavyweight champion Wladimir Klitschko for most of the 12 rounds they shared at the Esprit Arena in Dusseldorf, Germany, and limped away with a horde of titles, including the RING belt.

Wladimir Klitschko had no answer for Tyson Fury on an unforgettable night in November.

Half an hour after the unanimous decision was announced, Fury is sitting in his changing room, surrounded by family and friends, many of whom are from the Traveller community, picking at a blister on his foot while Luther Vandross' "Never Too Much" plays over the speakers. "Let's get the tunes going," Fury had previously instructed. Given his new stature, it wasn't long before someone jumped to it. Fury, of course, has music in his bones and, moments after dethroning Klitschko, even grabbed a microphone to serenade wife Paris with a version of Aerosmith's "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing." »

LARS BARON/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES; INSET: PATRIK STOLLARZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

"Have we got any plasters (bandages)?" he says, aimed at nobody in particular, the state of his blistered foot still a cause for concern.

"Don't keep ripping it because it will just get worse," advises a member of his family.

"He had a face on him like John Merrick after the fight, didn't he?" Tyson says, referring to the beaten champion. For his part, Fury is about as unblemished as any Klitschko challenger can be; barely a mark on his face, no cuts, no disfigurement. Just those pesky blisters on the soles of his left and right feet. "Give us a bandage and some tape, will you?" he says, again to nobody in particular.

Pretty soon the David Haye jokes start. Lest we forget, Haye too had once complained of foot problems following an unsuccessful title challenge against Klitschko back in 2011. Unlike Fury, though, he had taken to announcing the issue at a post-fight press conference. "I think you should stand on the table at the press conference and show your toe," someone wisecracks from the back of the room.

Fury flashes a wry smile. "Yeah, that was a toe problem, wasn't it? My foot was killing me the whole time. You know when you move a lot ..."

Haye, the last British boxer to challenge Klitschko, moved just as Fury did in Dusseldorf. He also invested in feints and head movement and he too was nailed sparingly by a gun-shy Klitschko. But, to the common eye, the difference between Haye and Klitschko was all in the size. Haye, at 6 feet 3 inches, was light on his feet and flashy with his hands but unable to close the distance; thus, Klitschko remained relatively safe and comfortable. Fury, on the other hand, just shy of 6 feet 9 inches, was *always* in punching range with Klitschko. He stepped forward and was in range. He stepped back and was in range. This meant that Klitschko, a dictator so accustomed to gaining comfort in the knowledge that his physical advantages meant he retained absolute control over his opponents, was, for once, the one left dangling on a string. "I was moving, I could see the shots coming, I was very focused," Fury says. "Peter (Fury, Tyson's uncle and trainer) was telling me to keep my right hand up because he was looking for the left hook all the time. I could see every time he set his legs that he was going to throw the left hook. I'd then just touch him with the jab and put him off balance again."

What the fight lacked in swashbuckling action it more than made up for in layered intrigue. Fury, after all, seemed to scurry into a sizable lead pretty early on and was taking rounds off Klitschko like no other challenger before him. He did so by listening to Peter, quelling his own desire to have a brawl – something which has previously made him seem open and hittable – and by using his stature the way Klitschko had used his so expertly through 18 consecutive title defenses.

"Everyone start clapping when Peter comes in, yeah?" says Tyson, as he gets wind of his coach's imminent arrival. "One, two, three ..."

Right on cue, Peter, a quiet man who brings to mind Charles Bronson's Harmonica character in the film "Once Upon a Time in the West," all sideways glances and crooked smiles, shuffles

FURY VS. KLITSCHKO II

REPEAT OR REVENGE? By Elliot Worsell

Dethroning Wladimir Klitschko was never going to be a swift or straightforward procedure. Indeed, soon after outboxing the great Ukrainian in Dusseldorf, Tyson Fury was told he'd likely have to return to Germany in the New Year for an immediate rematch. The date and venue are still to be decided, THE RING understood at press time, but Klitschko has formally announced his desire to trigger the rematch option and most expect it to take place by the end of May.

The next question, then, is will it be a case of repeat or revenge? Fury certainly seemed comfortable enough with Klitschko to suggest he can follow his own template and do a similar job in a second encounter. He controlled the fight. He out-Klitschko'd Klitschko. But it was hardly a classic. Neither man revealed all their cards.

With that in mind, to what extent can an old dog like Klitschko adapt and improve ahead of bout No. 2? Can he learn new tricks? Will he take more risks? There's an argument that he now knows Fury's game – his size, his length, his awkwardness – and could use his vast experience to figure him out. But he also turns 40 years of age in March and isn't a fighter known for his ability to increase his work-rate or make drastic adjustments in fights. Rather, he's a well-drilled and well-oiled machine, one that badly malfunctioned in November.

Fury, by contrast, is by far the fresher at 27 and will be buoyed by his first victory over Klitschko and the plaudits that followed. The timing, therefore, appears very much on his side. The momentum, too, is with the confident Englishman.

Yet in heavyweight boxing, there are no assurances. There are no form lines. It's why rematches tend to happen and it's why Fury, a considerable underdog, shocked the world when toppling Klitschko in 2015's "Upset of the Year."

Fury (left) entered his fight against Klitschko with confidence and a great game plan.

on through and those in the room erupt with applause.

"This foot is in pieces," Tyson tells him. "And the other one is even worse. It's nearly hanging off."

"That's just a sign of the effort you put in," says Peter. "That's what it means to win a world title. They don't come easy. Everybody doubted us. They all said we couldn't do it. Well, we've took it in Germany – we did what they all couldn't do. Now they can all be quiet. They don't know boxing like they think they know it."

"Amen to that," says the new champ.

"Everyone has always said nobody has been able to get inside of Wladimir, nobody has been able to stop his game plan," continues Peter. "He's fought all comers and various styles and nobody has been able to penetrate. But we worked it out. Tyson went in there and shut him down. He took away his jab. He did exactly what we set out to do. We weren't looking for power shots. Everybody tries to get to Wladimir's chin because they think it's weak. But they make big mistakes in the process. I just said to Tyson, 'Get in there, enjoy it and totally outbox him.'"

That he did, to the tune of scorecards which read 115-112, 115-112 and 116-111.

"You can have as many game plans as you want, but Tyson is a very gifted athlete and he was the one who was able to carry it out," says Peter. "They might say he looks ungainly at 6-foot-9 but he stands in front of people and they can't land a glove on him. Even sparring partners say, 'How on Earth can we do anything with this?' He has a very awkward and unconventional style and he knows how to make it work. He's very difficult to box."

Camera crews flood the room, keen to get a piece of Fury before he is whisked off to the post-fight press conference. The new champion warns everybody not to hand him any water, paranoid and fearful he might be drugged. "I worked so hard for this," he informs one interviewer. "To make it even sweeter, nobody believed I could do it tonight. There were only a select few people who believed I could do it. But, from the moment I laced on a pair of gloves, I said I'd be heavyweight champion of the world. What are we saying, Shane?"

Shane, his brother, younger by two years, beams proudly. "You did," he says. "Signed, sealed, delivered."

Shane was Tyson's first sparring partner back when they wrapped their mother's tea towels around their fists as gloves. One tea towel, one boxing glove; an old, sweaty pair of gloves once worn by their father, John, a former pro heavyweight, was split so each boy had one. Once that was sorted, it was on. There'd be a rug in the kitchen – a spacious one, Tyson is quick to stress – and whoever forced the other off the rug would be declared the winner. It didn't stop there, either. So consumed by the sport were the pair, they even designed world championship boxing uniforms to wear during their daily duels in the kitchen. "Growing up with a dad as a professional boxer, and being part of a family involved in boxing, you don't know anything else," Fury says. "I remember hitting my dad's hands – one-two, left hook – as soon as I was old enough to do it.

"I didn't have my first amateur fight until I was 16, but, before I even had an amateur fight, me and my dad used to spar outside in the garden. I was 14 at the time, but 6-foot-5 and 16-stone (224 pounds). My uncle, Frank (Burton), said he'd never seen anyone move like me before and that he thought I'd become the heavyweight champion of the world."

Thirteen years later, this prophecy was proved correct. Tyson Fury, a resident of the seaside town of Morecambe, population 35,000, was indeed crowned the heavyweight champion of the world. And the next day, while surrounded by British media and having sauntered through the hotel in just his cheap sports socks – owing to his foot pain – he waits for it all to sink in. "I don't feel any different this morning to how I felt two weeks ago or yesterday or the day before that," he says, pawing at a slight lump by the side of his eye. "I'm still the same Tyson Fury and always will be. I always said that winning the heavyweight championship of the world wouldn't change me. The money wouldn't change me. And being in the limelight wouldn't change me. It won't change the person I am, unfortunately for the fans."

Unquestionably a polarizing figure, Fury came under intense scrutiny in the weeks leading up to the fight for comments made to the London-based Daily Mail about various subjects including homosexuality, pedophilia and devil-worship. Hardly your typical pre-fight chit-chat, it seemed an old-fashioned stitch-up job, and Fury, as open and opinionated as any sportsman today, someone who refuses to hide behind a protective wall of PR bods, was vilified for being a little too honest and outspoken. Frankly, there's a vulnerability to him, both in and out of the ring, that leaves him susceptible to being exploited. "I think the fans and the boxing fraternity expect me to play the act I've always played and now [that] I'm heavyweight champion of the world I've got the perfect stage, haven't I?" he says.

It will certainly be a fun ride. Fury, usually far more exciting than he was able to show against the hesitant Klitschko, is full of charm and charisma when caught on the right day, and, most importantly, he understands the game. He revels in the showbiz element of the sport, appreciates the need to sell himself as a product and is also a far better athlete and technician than many detractors give him credit for. His is a story of perseverance, too, having seen numerous scheduled dates – two with Haye, one with Dereck Chisora and one with Klitschko – fall by the wayside through no fault of his own.

"As far as I'm concerned, if I never win another fight – if I get beaten in a six-rounder – I don't care," he says. "I have achieved what I set out to achieve in life. I'm a winner.

"I had a lot of bumps in the road and there were times when I thought to myself that I wasn't going to carry on; I'm just going to pack it in, I've had enough. But I stuck with it and showed that dedication and determination pays off."

Peter goes one better. "I said before this fight that if he wins the world heavyweight title and I have a heart attack the next morning, that's fine by me," he says. "It wouldn't bother me. This kid has come to Germany, won this world title and it means so much for the family."

The Fury family has arrived; make no mistake, you'll either love them or hate them. But, with three active pros in the family (heavyweights Hughie and Young Fury also box), and one now in possession of the sport's greatest prize, the world sure as hell better get used to them.

Fury and his team knew exactly where he stood after their big upset.

THE 87TH ANNUAL *RING* AWARDS

THE BEST OF 2015

The past year brought fans memorable battles, huge matchups, surprising results and important milestones. Here are the people and events that stood out most.

»

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

BY MICHAEL ROSENTHAL

TYSON FURY

Tyson Fury went home with a new collection of belts on Nov. 28.

The longer the fight went on, the more astonishing it became.

Those who had seen Wladimir Klitschko dismantle one opponent after another waited for him to turn the tide against Tyson Fury on Nov. 28 in Dusseldorf, Germany. And waited. And waited. And waited.

Never happened.

Klitschko, undefeated for more than a decade, had nothing. In the end, Fury proved he had more than a big body and big mouth, winning a wide unanimous decision to become the newwwwww heavyweight champion of the world.

The natural reaction was to point a finger at Klitschko, who surely could've done more to make the fight competitive. After all, the giant fighting machine threw only 19 punches per round (and connected on only four. Four!).

Fury deserves a lot of credit for that. He said beforehand that he'd neutralize Klitschko's attack by neutralizing his jab, the foundation of his arsenal. And he did. He used his height (6 feet 9 inches) and surprising mobility to baffle his frustrated foe for 12 solid rounds.

"I told you that I would take his left jab away and he wouldn't be able to cross the right hand," Fury told THE RING. "He even admitted that's what happened at the post-fight press conference. He said he couldn't hit me or get the proper range and that's because he couldn't touch me with his jab. Without the jab, the right hand, left hook doesn't work."

The new champ didn't do much offensively either, landing only 7 of 31 punches per round. That was enough because Klitschko was utterly shut down, though. He simply couldn't adjust to Fury's tactics, which made the job of the judges quite easy. No one disputed the scores of 115-112, 116-111 and 115-112, which gave Fury the RING, IBF (which was later stripped), WBA and WBO titles.

Truly stunning. And profoundly significant.

Fury's victory over Klitschko was one of the biggest upsets in the history of the division, perhaps even rivaling that of Buster Douglas, whose knockout of Mike Tyson turned boxing upside down in 1990. Klitschko ruled the division much as Tyson did.

Even if that's hard to swallow, everyone would agree that Fury's accomplishment was historic.

Plus, he single-handedly breathed life into what was essentially a dead weight class. The Klitschkos – Wladimir and brother Vitali – had sucked all the drama out of what had always been the sport's glamour division with their dominance.

Fury's victory instantly changed everything, opening the door to all kinds of drama. Will Fury be able to repeat his performance in a pending rematch? How would he fare against American slugger Deontay Wilder? And 2012 Olympic champion Anthony Joshua looms.

The point is that people are talking about the heavyweight division again thanks to a remarkable performance on an unforgettable evening, one that made Tyson Fury the 2015 Fighter of the Year. ★

CANELO ALVAREZ

The Mexican star had his biggest year, stopping James Kirkland in three sensational rounds and then easily outpointing future Hall of Famer Miguel Cotto in the second biggest fight of the year. The strong pay-per-view numbers for the latter fight underscored Alvarez's star power.

GENNADY GOLOVKIN

The supremely gifted Kazakhstani extended his remarkable string of knockouts to 21 with three more stoppages in 2015. That included KOs of solid opponents Martin Murray and David Lemieux, who learned the hard way that "GGG" is something truly special.

ROMAN GONZALEZ

The little Nicaraguan replaced the now-retired Floyd Mayweather Jr. as pound-for-pound king and made it fashionable to get excited about the flyweight division in a successful 2015, during which he stopped three opponents, including former two-division titleholder Brian Viloria.

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.

The richest fight in history – Mayweather vs. Manny Pacquiao – was a complete dud. That shouldn't reflect poorly on Mayweather, though. He did his job, dominating a still-capable Pacquiao to win a one-sided decision and following with another dominating victory over Andre Berto.

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

BY BRIAN HARTY

FRANCISCO VARGAS TKO 9 TAKASHI MIURA

"I feel that my preparation paid off for this fight," Francisco Vargas said after beating Takashi Miura on Nov. 21 in Las Vegas.

Preparation is great but there's no drill that teaches the art of blowing minds. What truly paid off for Vargas was having the chin of an icebreaker and the will to reverse an outcome that looked all but published.

Going into the fight, which took place on the Miguel Cotto-Canelo Alvarez undercard at Mandalay Bay, Miura was known for heavy hands and was expected to use them generously for the fifth defense of his junior lightweight title. Vargas, meanwhile, had never lost or even touched the canvas. A good fight was predicted – just the natural result of someone dubbed "Mexican Assassin" meeting a Mexican who refuses to be assassinated.

But after 75 seconds it didn't look like it would amount to much at all. Vargas rocked Miura with a right hand and then swarmed the stumbling southpaw with what seemed like a standard end-of-fight flurry. It was not the end, however.

With just under 30 seconds remaining in Round 4 Miura landed an uppercut. Perhaps distracted by the little birdies orbiting his head, Vargas then took a murderous straight left that put him on his

NAOKI FUKUDA

Francisco Vargas (right in the large photo) found something within himself to pull out a dramatic victory over Takashi Miura.

trunks in the corner. The 2008 Olympian got up with blood draining from a gash below his right eye.

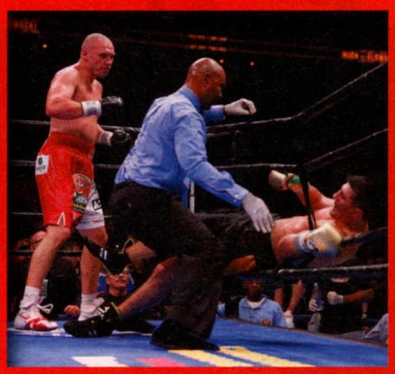
"Estaș bien (are you OK)?" asked referee Tony Weeks. Vargas nodded.

The punches only got nastier in both directions but it was the Mexican who was getting the worst of it. At the end of the Round 8, half blind, Vargas got caught with another straight left that mashed the tip of his chin into his neck and he went reeling backward as the juice drained from his legs. Somehow he remained standing, covered up and endured Miura's assault for the remaining seconds of the round.

During the break Vargas appeared doomed. He'd just been badly buzzed and it looked like someone had attacked his eye socket with an ice cream scoop. The Olympic rings tattoo on his shoulder was splattered with blood. Those in his corner, the ringside doctor and probably Vargas himself knew Round 9 would be the last, one way or the other, and the odds were prohibitively in favor of "one way." That still would've been a good fight, just not the "other" sort that ends up on this page.

Seconds after rising from his stool Vargas stunned Miura with a perfect uppercut and followed it with a right cross that reduced the champion to half his height. Miura avoided touching his gloves to the canvas and straightened up but shouldn't have. A flush right uppercut-left hook combo was waiting for him and he went down, falling sideways like a crutch had been kicked out from under him. Heart then battled nervous system as he staggered to his feet.

His victory going up in flames, Miura threw himself onto Vargas and tried to smother him but failed. A couple more solid punches from Vargas and Weeks intervened, thus sealing a comeback that few were prepared to believe. ★



KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI KO 11 MARCO HUCK

It was supposed to be a glorious night for Huck, who was going for a record 14th consecutive successful defense of his cruiserweight title. His chances were looking good after Glowacki went down in a thrilling sixth but the inexperienced Pole scored a major upset when he sent Huck through the ropes in Round 11.

ROMAN MARTINEZ D 12 ORLANDO SALIDO

Martinez was the better boxer but Salido was even more relentless than in the 12 roughhouse rounds of their first fight (also deserving of a nomination). The unyielding Martinez retained his belt with a draw but most thought Salido had done enough to win.

LUCAS MATTHYSSE MD 12 RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV

Matthysse's heavy hands were sharp and he drew blood early but Provodnikov once again proved that the strength of his chin is trumped only by the size of his heart. "The Machine" vs. "The Siberian Rocky" explained both monikers with brutal clarity.

ANDRZEJ FONFARA UD 12 NATHAN CLEVERLY

The back-and-forth opening round set the tone for this all-action light heavyweight grudge match. Cleverly's combinations were utterly malicious and his overall output was incredible but it was the grinning Fonfara who inflicted more damage with his punches.

THE BEST OF 2015

KNOCKOUT OF THE YEAR

BY BERNARD FERNANDEZ

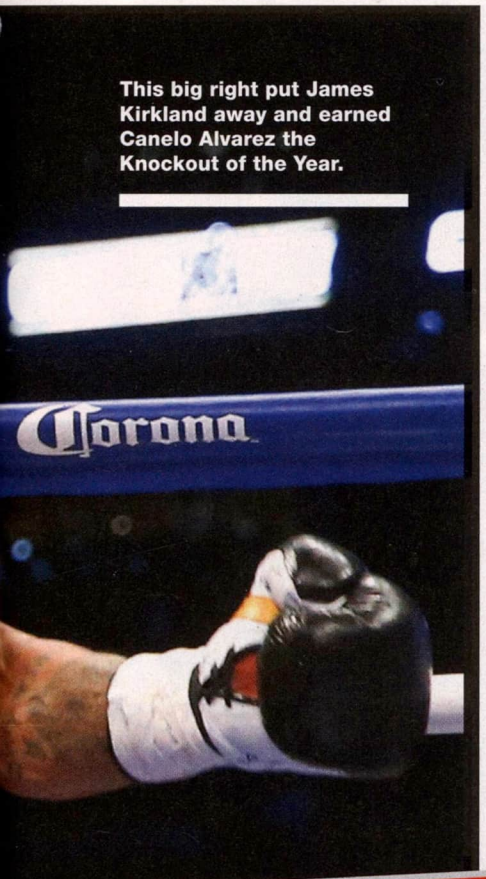
CANELO ALVAREZ KO 3 JAMES KIRKLAND

Following the disappointing nature of the much-anticipated Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao bout the preceding week, fight fans were starved for a fight that not only promised lots of action but actually delivered it. The matchup of power-punchers Canelo Alvarez and James Kirkland, with a combined 59 knockouts in 79 bouts, figured to provide a jolt of adrenaline to cure the post-May-Pac blahs.

Did it ever.

With a raucous, pro-Alvarez crowd of 31,588 spectators in attendance at Houston's Minute Maid Park, home of baseball's Astros, Alvarez, a former junior middleweight titleholder, exchanged big swings with veteran southpaw Kirkland as if they were squaring off in a pugilistic version of Home Run Derby. Kirkland immediately bull-rushed Alvarez to the ropes in the opening round but the Mexican sensation is comfortable fighting there when it suits his purpose and skilled enough to spin away as needed. Just over a minute into Round 1, he presaged the eventual outcome by dropping Kirkland with a left hook to the body and a right cross to the jaw. And just before the bell ending

ED MULHOLLAND; INSET: NAOKI FUKUDA



This big right put James Kirkland away and earned Canelo Alvarez the Knockout of the Year.

the round, Alvarez emphasized his advantage by landing two more big hooks to the body.

Kirkland again tried to muscle Alvarez to the ropes to begin the second round and again his quarry slipped away and dug hard downstairs. A victory for Alvarez then seemed not so much a question of "if," but "when," and the answer was provided in Round 3.

Again Alvarez found himself with his back to the ropes but this time he stopped Kirkland dead in his tracks with a jolting right to the jaw and then a ripping right uppercut that dropped his desperate opponent for a second time. A clearly buzzed Kirkland beat the count but not for long, as Alvarez landed flush with a right hand that caused Kirkland to do a semi-pirouette before crashing to the canvas, semi-conscious. Referee Jon Schorle didn't even bother with the formality of a count. ★

KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI KO 11 MARCO HUCK

Huck, the WBO cruiserweight titleholder, came to Newark, New Jersey, for his U.S. debut with the idea of enthralling American fans while also setting the record for successful consecutive defenses in his division. He left without his belt as he was dropped twice in Round 11 by Poland's Glowacki, prompting referee David Fields to waive a count.

GABRIEL BRACERO KO 1 DANNY O'CONNOR

With only five knockout victories heading into his rematch with Danny O'Connor, Gabriel Bracero wasn't known as a hard puncher. But a single overhand right landed flush and sent O'Connor crashing onto his back, unconscious. Elapsed time: 41 seconds.

DANIEL JACOBS TKO 1 PETER QUILLIN

Jacobs landed a hard right that rocked Quillin in the "Battle for Brooklyn." Jacobs then landed 27 of 53 punches, including the temple shot that sent the challenger reeling and caused referee Harvey Dock to wave the fight off after only 85 seconds.

YENIFEL VICENTE KO 3 JUAN DOMINGUEZ

Vicente's one-punch takeout of Dominguez looked a lot like Bracero's, the big difference being that it happened in the third round. An overhand right found the mark in the featherweight contest and Dominguez went down onto his back, so out that he had to be removed from the ring on a stretcher.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

BY TOM GRAY

AMIR IMAM VS. FIDEL MALDONADO JR.: ROUND 3

Amir Imam (left) and Fidel Maldonado Jr. gave fans three minutes to remember.

A new WBC heavyweight champion was crowned when Deontay Wilder scored a 12-round unanimous decision over Bermane Stiverne on Jan. 17 of last year at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. But it was an unforgettable undercard attraction that had everyone talking.

Amir Imam, a then-unbeaten junior welterweight contender, was heavily favored to beat Fidel Maldonado Jr. and Imam got off to a great start, flooring his southpaw opponent with a terrific right hand as the bell sounded to end Round 2.

It was way too early to break out the champagne, however. The third frame was as memorable as they come. Angered by the knockdown, Maldonado responded with a vicious straight left hand in the opening 20 seconds and yelled at his stricken opponent as his backside struck the canvas.

Imam rose quickly and the pair continued to trade vicious power shots with Maldonado pounding his chest or screaming in derision almost every time he absorbed a blow, which was a frequent occurrence.

Maldonado fired bombs from every conceivable angle whereas Imam was clearly the more polished and professional operator. "The Young Master" patiently awaited his opportunity and a perfectly-timed right to the chin finally dropped Maldonado in his own corner.

This time he was badly hurt and Imam knew it. The 25-year-old attacked with venom and, with Maldonado now pinned in a neutral corner, he released a heavy two-fisted burst that dropped him again. Brave to the end, the turbo-charged lefty scrambled to his feet but the momentum was now against him and his chance at a huge upset victory was gone.

Imam controlled the fourth with a sharp array of boxing skills and then closed out with a highlight-reel knockout in Round 5. Following an endless spell of effective counterpunching, Imam put full leverage on a right hand and followed with a quick left hook that dropped Maldonado to his knees.

Veteran referee Robert Byrd was perhaps guilty of a premature stoppage but there weren't too many complaints from Maldonado's corner team, or the fighter himself, when this sensational contest came to an end.

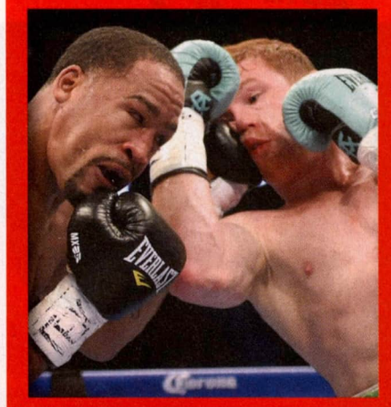
"I'm always ready to put on a show," said Imam at the post-fight press conference.

"With the knockdown, I was turning and he got on the outside and caught me right on the chin with a good shot. I bounced back, though, and finished the fight. Southpaws are always going to give you trouble until you figure them out."

Imam posted two more victories in 2015 before he was dramatically upset in eight rounds by the unheralded Adrian Granados last November. Maldonado has had one fight since, a first-round stoppage win over journeyman Lowell Brownfield. ★

STEVE MARCUS/GETTY IMAGES

RUNNERS UP



CANELO ALVAREZ VS. JAMES KIRKLAND: ROUND 1

Kirkland controlled the first half of a wildly entertaining session before being badly hurt and dropped by a big right hand. Alvarez went on to prevail by a third-round knockout.

EDWIN RODRIGUEZ VS. MICHAEL SEALS: ROUND 1

In a thrilling light heavyweight bout, Rodriguez floored Seals in the opening seconds but was paid back in full by two booming right-hand knockdowns. Rodriguez regrouped to halt Seals in three.

TAKASHI MIURA VS. FRANCISCO VARGAS: ROUND 4

Miura lost the first three rounds but bravely continued to trade with Vargas on the inside. His determination was rewarded when he scored a brutal left-hand knockdown in the closing seconds of the fourth. Vargas finally won the war in Round 9.

JAMES DEGALE VS. LUCIAN BUTE: ROUND 12

Two determined super middleweight left-handers traded leather at a searing pace in a brilliant closing session. A capacity crowd at the Videotron Arena in Quebec were on their feet as the final bell sounded. DeGale claimed a unanimous decision.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

BY ELLIOT WORSELL

TYSON FURY UD 12 WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

Tyson Fury (left) beat Wladimir Klitschko at his own game.

So dominating was Wladimir Klitschko during a nine-year world heavyweight championship reign, the mere sight of him taking a clean punch, let alone losing rounds or fights, could have been considered an upset of sorts. If he didn't jab challengers into a trance, he controlled and bullied them in clinches. If he didn't stun and knock them out with right hands and left hooks, he ensured they lost every second of every round before having their fate determined by three lopsided scorecards. Whatever the method, Klitschko had seemingly mastered the art of using his immense physical advantages to maintain a vice-like grip on the numerous world heavyweight titles in his possession.

But then along came 6-foot-9 Tyson Fury. As unproven as Klitschko was dominating, the larger-than-life Brit ventured to Dusseldorf, Germany, in November convinced he had something different from the 17 others (in 18 defenses; Klitschko fought Tony Thompson twice) who had tried to dethrone the giant Ukrainian since 2006. Granted, wins over the likes of Dereck Chisora and Steve Cunningham, two smaller men, didn't exactly support such ambitious claims but his confidence alone set him apart from most previous Klitschko victims.

It proved to be far more than just a sales pitch, too, as Fury and his team impressively made it their mission to unsettle Klitschko during fight week. They haggled over the gloves. They had a spongy ring canvas tweaked to better suit them. He wanted things right. This wasn't just about a payday and a fleeting moment in the spotlight. This was destiny.

"If I don't win … if I can't beat a near-40-year-old man, I might as well retire," he said.

Fury then distanced himself further from a long list of failures by soaking up a raucous atmosphere created by 55,000 fans at the Esprit Arena, singing along to a Randy Travis country song and blowing kisses to the crowd. Nervous? No chance. Then the first bell sounded. Then Fury started winning rounds. Then came the looks of shock at ringside. As more rounds passed, the greater Fury's lead became. But how? Klitschko opponents weren't supposed to take rounds from him in Germany. Knowing this, we tried to give Klitschko the benefit of the doubt. Still nothing. Still Fury continued to expertly use his height, reach and athleticism the way Klitschko had used his to keep smaller men at bay for over a decade. Still he looked utterly comfortable.

Soon enough the fight was over and Fury's victory, on the cards, was almost as inevitable as the many Klitschko decision wins that came before it. There was little argument. He'd beaten the champion at his own game. And he'd somehow even made it look easy. ★

KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/GETTY IMAGES

RUNNERS UP

JAMIE MCDONNELL UD 12 TOMOKI KAMEDA I

Bantamweight contender Jamie McDonnell made noise internationally on May 9 when he ventured to Texas to win a hard-fought decision against Japanese star and pre-fight favorite Tomoki Kameda, unbeaten in 31 fights. It was no fluke. The underrated McDonnell returned to Texas four months later and did it again.

BADOU JACK MD 12 ANTHONY DIRRELL

Unfairly tarnished by a first-round knockout loss to Derek Edwards, few picked Badou Jack to snatch Anthony Dirrell's WBC super middleweight title on April 24. In fact, all the talk was of Dirrell using the fight as a warmup for an imminent collision with George Groves. Jack shocked Dirrell, taking his title and then successfully defending it against Groves later that year.

ARON MARTINEZ UD 10 DEVON ALEXANDER

A sizable underdog going into the fight, Aron Martinez proved no respecter of reputations as he attached himself to Devon Alexander from the get-go and outworked the former world champion for most of 10 rounds on Oct. 14.

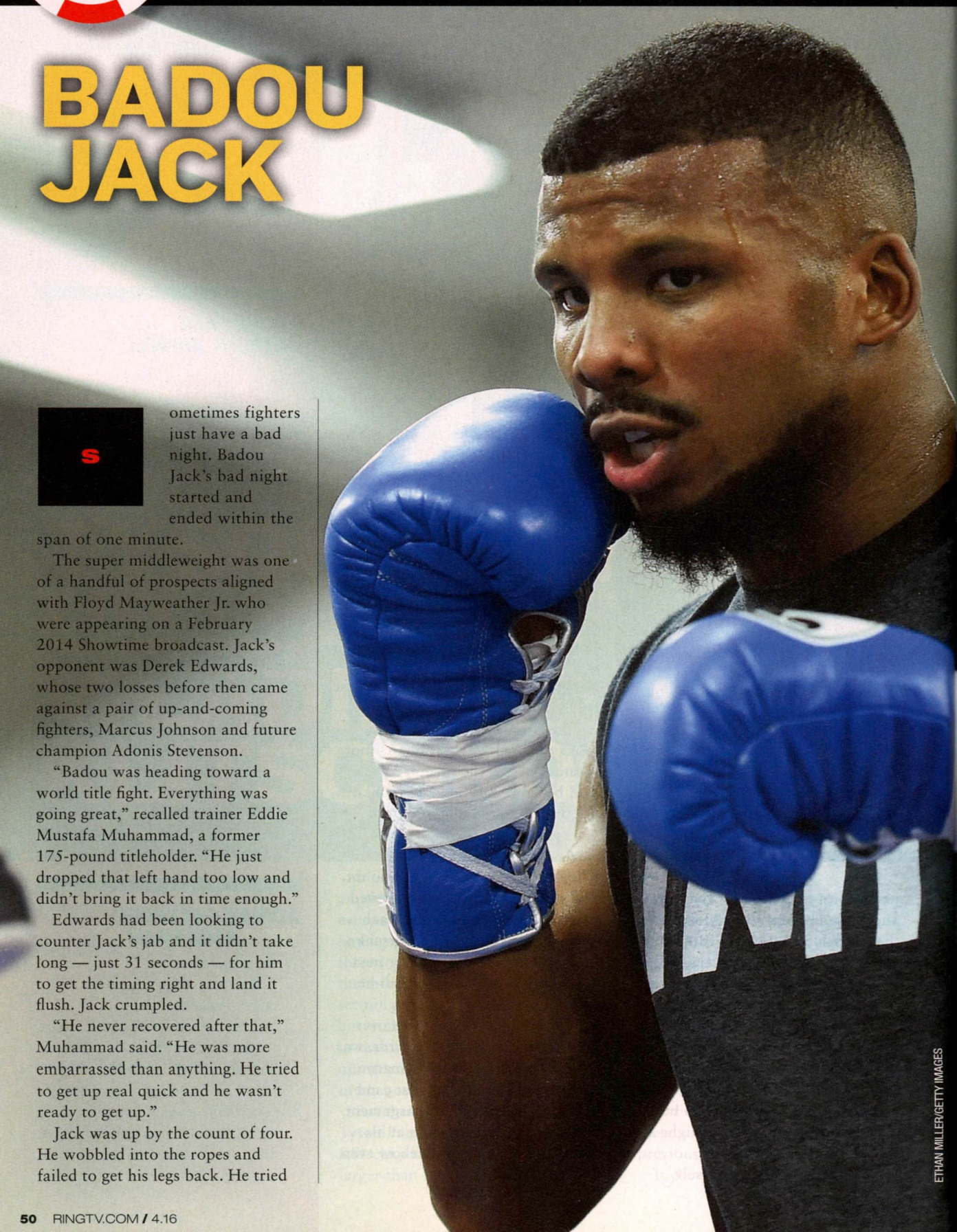
ADRIAN GRANADOS TKO 8 AMIR IMAM

Nicknamed "Young Master," Amir Imam was 18-0 and had appeared faultless before durable trial-horse Adrian Granados got his hurtful hands on him and explained, in brutal fashion, how he wouldn't always have it his own way in the pros.

COMEBACK OF THE YEAR

BY DAVID GREISMAN

BADOU JACK



Sometimes fighters just have a bad night. Badou Jack's bad night started and ended within the span of one minute.

The super middleweight was one of a handful of prospects aligned with Floyd Mayweather Jr. who were appearing on a February 2014 Showtime broadcast. Jack's opponent was Derek Edwards, whose two losses before then came against a pair of up-and-coming fighters, Marcus Johnson and future champion Adonis Stevenson.

"Badou was heading toward a world title fight. Everything was going great," recalled trainer Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, a former 175-pound titleholder. "He just dropped that left hand too low and didn't bring it back in time enough."

Edwards had been looking to counter Jack's jab and it didn't take long — just 31 seconds — for him to get the timing right and land it flush. Jack crumpled.

"He never recovered after that," Muhammad said. "He was more embarrassed than anything. He tried to get up real quick and he wasn't ready to get up."

Jack was up by the count of four. He wobbled into the ropes and failed to get his legs back. He tried

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

We learned in 2015 that one should never count out Badou Jack.

to tie up but Edwards landed a clubbing right hand in the clinch. Jack fell forward onto his face as he tried to rise and staggered backward once he did. The referee waved things off just 61 seconds after the opening bell, giving Jack his first pro loss.

The cliche is that it's not the knockdowns that define us, but how we respond afterward. Jack didn't respond well at that moment but it is what he has done since then that makes him the right choice for THE RING's Comeback of the Year.

"We patched up a lot of things right after the Edwards fight," Muhammad said. "We elevated his game completely. We told him what to do and what not to do."

Jack fought twice more in 2014, outpointing Jason Escalera and stopping Francisco Sierra. And then in 2015 he defeated Anthony Dirrell by a majority decision to win the WBC belt. His first defense was under the pay-per-view spotlight as part of Mayweather's final fight. Jack faced George Groves, floored him in the opening round and picked up a competitive split decision.

Jack is now among the names in a division waiting for someone to step up in the absence of Andre Ward, who has moved to 175, and the retired Carl Froch. The other three major titleholders are Arthur Abraham, Fedor Chudinov and James DeGale. There's also talk that Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. could come to 168 and challenge Jack soon.

Jack has been defeated but he hasn't been derailed. He's back on track, hoping to put that one bad night well behind him and to add many more good nights ahead. ★

RUNNERS UP

KELL BROOK

It hadn't even been a month since Brook's title win over Shawn Porter when he was attacked by a man with a machete and suffered a gaping wound to his leg. Brook returned to the ring in March and still appears to be one of the best welterweights today, as he dominated and dispatched Jo Jo Dan and then Frankie Gavin later in the year.

ANTHONY CROLLA

Crolla suffered head and ankle injuries after chasing burglars who had broken into a neighbor's home in late 2014. He was struck by a concrete slab, leaving him in no condition for a title fight that was supposed to come in early 2015. He recovered, fought Darleys Perez to a draw in July and then scored a knockout to win a belt in their November rematch.

DAVID LEMIEUX

Lemieux's two stunning losses in 2011 to Marco Antonio Rubio (by TKO) and Joachim Alcine (by decision) could've meant he'd been exposed. Instead he improved, winning nine in a row, picking up a world title against Hassan N'Dam in June and landing a pay-per-view date with Gennady Golovkin. Lemieux lost badly but he belongs in with other big names at middleweight.

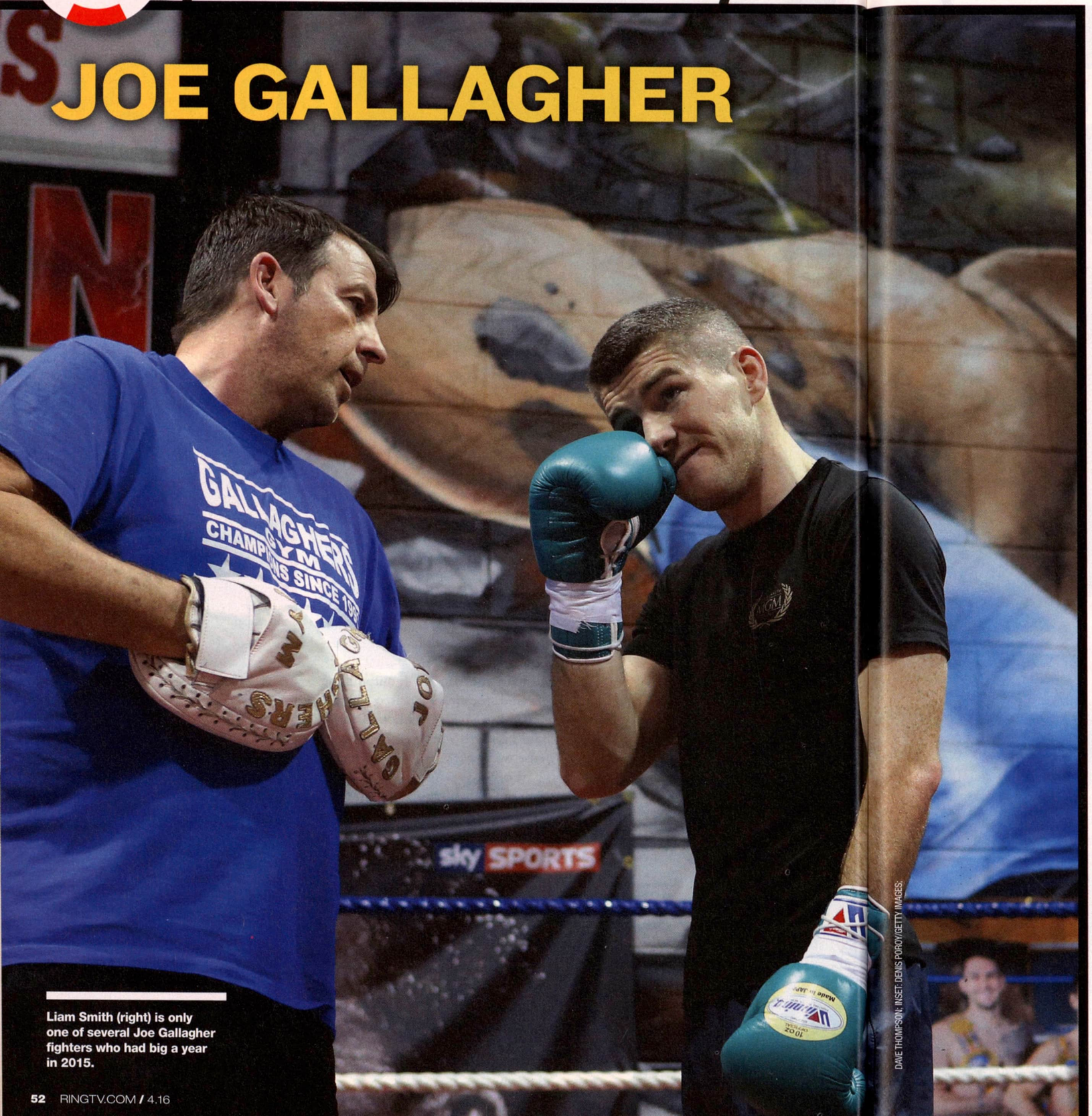
AKIRA YAEGASHI

In 2014, established world champion Akira Yaegashi lost badly to pound-for-pound entrant Roman Gonzalez and was then knocked out by Mexico's Pedro Guevara. In 2015, the Japanese star regrouped by winning two confidence building bouts before becoming a three-weight titleholder at the expense of Javier Mendoza, whom he defeated on points.

TRAINER OF THE YEAR

BY ELLIOT WORSELL

JOE GALLAGHER



Liam Smith (right) is only one of several Joe Gallagher fighters who had big a year in 2015.

DAVE THOMPSON; INSET: DENIS PORO/GETTY IMAGES

Manchester's Joe Gallagher was once known in Britain as the trainer with the long unbeaten run. His fighters, combined, were undefeated in more than 50 fights and Gallagher rightly received praise for his ability to guide so many to so many consecutive wins (albeit at a certain level). But in 2015 he went one better. No longer content to construct win streaks, Gallagher helped establish Scott Quigg, Anthony Crolla, Liam Smith, Stephen Smith and Callum Smith as Top 10-ranked fighters. Forget the numbers game; Gallagher's boys are now making noise at a world-class level.

It would have been a successful year for Gallagher if he'd simply marshalled *one* of his pupils toward the summit of the sport but his unusual selling point is an uncanny ability to juggle numerous fighters at one time – four Smith brothers for starters, all of whom have now won British titles – and have them *all* compete and thrive on the world stage. He's accustomed to popping up in the corner two or sometimes three times on a single card and there's rarely a weekend when Gallagher isn't at a boxing venue somewhere in Britain.

This is by no means normal behavior. Indeed, speak to any coach in world boxing and they'll tell you how difficult it is training two world-class fighters in the same gym, let alone four or five. And that's not to mention the domestic champions and young prospects Gallagher has floating around the periphery. It's not easy. If it were easy, many more would be doing it.

Key to the Gallaghers Gym magic, it would seem, is its pied piper's obsession with the sport of boxing. It's all-encompassing, it's contagious. Pick up the phone to Joe for a brief conversation, perhaps a short interview, and an hour later he'll still be nattering about the fight game, about his fighters, about fighters in general. You forgive him for it, too. You also quickly realize it's a passion that rubs off on the fighters in his gym. They fight the way he talks; full of energy, busy, intense, totally dedicated to a game plan.

Unlike some trainers who might win this award, Gallagher's success is not of the flash-in-the-pan variety. He hasn't merely attached himself to a big-name fighter or a can't-miss prospect and then reaped the rewards in 2015. Instead, Gallagher has been working toward this honor for a number of years, taking honest fighters from scratch, building them the right way and then helping them score wins at a world-class level. Hard graft, hard yards. Rinse, repeat. ★

RUNNERS UP

EDDY REYNOSO

Canelo Alvarez's career-long trainer guided his fighter to two impressive victories in 2015, his third-round knockout of James Kirkland and one-sided decision over Miguel Cotto. Then, on New Year's Eve, Reynoso's fighter Jose Argumedo stunned Katsunari Takayama to win the IBF strawweight title.

ARNULFO OBANDO

Arnulfo Obando is the man behind arguably the most technically efficient boxer in the sport today: Roman "Chocolatito" Gonzalez. He has helped produce as close to a perfect fighting specimen as we've seen for a long, long time.

ABEL SANCHEZ

What sets Abel Sanchez apart is his ability to somehow settle a violent being like Gennady "GGG" Golovkin and have him stick to game plans, patiently bide his time and *then* explode only when the moment is right. When controlling a man as offense-minded and physically gifted as GGG, that's no mean feat.

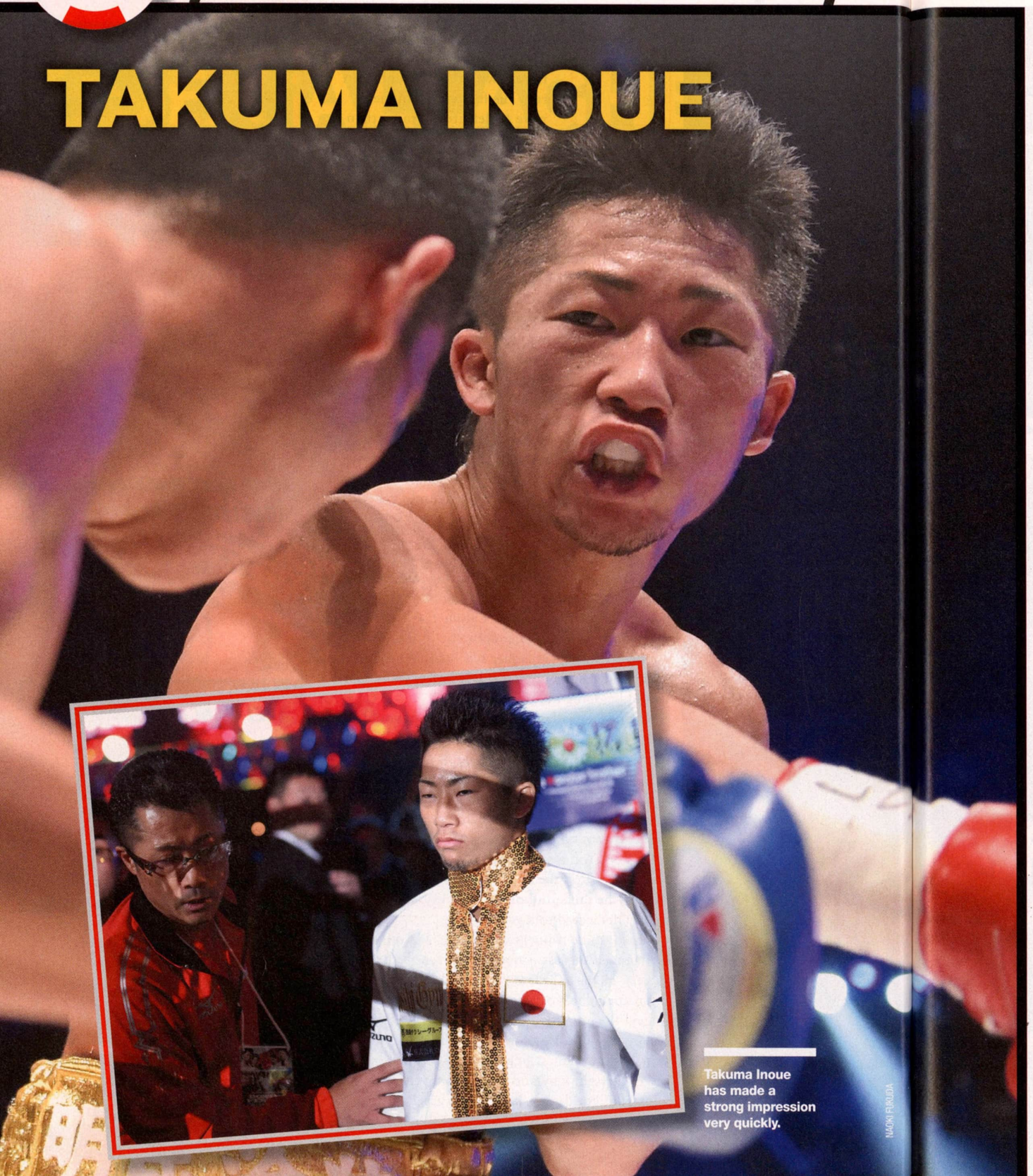
PETER FURY

Given that the fighting Furys are a close-knit family set-up, Peter Fury was always going to be defined by the successes of his blood relatives. Well, Tyson Fury, his nephew, won the undisputed world heavyweight title in 2015, and Peter, the man forever in Tyson's ear, is now regarded as one of the best boxing brains in the business.

PROSPECT OF THE YEAR

BY DOUG FISCHER

TAKUMA INOUE



Takuma Inoue has made a strong impression very quickly.

NAOKI FUKUDA

It's rare for a fighter to earn THE RING's Prospect of the Year award on the strength of one fight, but it isn't unprecedented. The Prospect of the Year for 2013 was Vasyl Lomachenko, who only had one pro bout under his belt at the time.

Lomachenko was a special case. The two-time Olympic champ is arguably one of the best amateur boxers of all time. He was a very mature 25 when he turned pro thanks to nearly 400 amateur bouts. Insiders knew it wouldn't take the Ukrainian southpaw long to win a world title.

The same can be said about Takuma Inoue, who had fought only once in 2015 – a 12-round unanimous decision over Mark Anthony Geraldo – when he was selected as this year's top prospect. (The Japanese junior bantamweight fought a second time, a decision over Rene Dacquel on Dec. 29, just before THE RING went to press.)

Inoue, who turned 20 on Dec. 26, isn't anywhere near as seasoned as Lomachenko was in 2013 but the young phenom is as advanced as a boxer with only six bouts and two years in the pro ranks can be.

If Inoue is half as precocious as his older brother Naoya, a two-division titleholder by age 21 (in just eight bouts), he'll be world ranked by mid-2016 and wearing a major belt by the end of the year.

Inoue (6-0, 1 KO), who is trained by his father, Shingo (who also trains Naoya), and promoted by former strawweight champ Hideyuki Ohashi, isn't being moved quite as quickly as his older brother was but he's not taking baby steps either.

In his second pro bout he faced Fahlan Sakkreerin Jr., a young junior flyweight contender from Thailand who handed former 105-pound titleholder Ryo Miyazaki his first defeat. Inoue controlled his more-experienced opponent (23-2 at the time) en route to an eight-round decision using stiff jabs, hard straight right hands, good in-and-out movement and sneaky left hooks. Inoue exhibited a fast-and-nimble style similar to his older brother's, only not as explosive.

Inoue's power and physical strength will likely improve as his body matures. He has already grown from the 108-pound division to 115 pounds. For now, his talent, athleticism and solid skillset are enough to outclass quality opposition, such as Nestor Daniel Narvaez, a rugged, 33-year-old former title challenger from Argentina whom Inoue faced in his fourth pro fight.

Prior to being outpointed by Inoue over eight rounds, Narvaez had only suffered two losses – a majority decision to then-WBC/RING Magazine flyweight champ Toshiyuki Igarashi and a unanimous nod to fearsome flyweight/junior bantamweight contender Luis Concepcion.

Inoue handled fringe contender Mark Anthony Geraldo in his first 12-round bout in June. Ringside observers believe he had such command of the well-traveled Filipino that he took his foot off the gas pedal out of boredom during the middle of the fight, enabling Geraldo to earn a few rounds. Inoue won his first regional title with scores of 117-110, 116-111, 115-112.

More will come in 2016, including contender status. But for now Inoue is the Prospect of the Year. ★

RUNNERS UP

JOSEPH PARKER
17-0 (15 KOS)

The 24-year-old heavyweight's blend of speed, power and aggression blasted four solid opponents in 2015. None – including well-traveled veterans Kali Meehan and Bowie Tupou – could take the dynamic New Zealander past Round 4. Parker is the most talented Kiwi heavyweight since David Tua.

ANTOINE DOUGLAS
19-0-1 (13 KOS)

The talented Washington, D.C. , middleweight exhibited technique, poise, versatility and finishing instinct beyond his age (23) in dispatching a pair of unbeaten opponents – Thomas LaManna (TKO 6) and Istvan Szili (TKO 3) – and Australian veteran Les Sherrington (TKO 4) in 2015.

DIEGO DE LA HOYA
13-0 (7 KOS)

Few prospects advanced as much as the 21-year-old junior featherweight from Mexicali, Mexico, in 2015. The cousin of Oscar De La Hoya (his promoter) faced five tough opponents and proved that he has real ability to go with his name recognition by outclassing former title challengers Manuel Roman and Jesus Ruiz.

JACK CATTERALL
14-0 (9 KOS)

The fast and fluid southpaw from Chorley, England, is making waves in the junior welterweight division of the British scene at the tender age of 22. In 2015, Catterall used his combination of deft footwork and accurate punching to dispatch rugged Argentines Cesar David Inalef and Gabriel Calfin, shut out unbeaten Jarkko Putkonen over 10 rounds and stop Noe Nunez in three.

THE BEST OF 2015

EVENT OF THE YEAR

BY NORM FRAUENHEIIM

The Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao fight was huge and hugely disappointing.

JOHN GURZINSKI/AP/GETTY IMAGES

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. VS. MANNY PACQUIAO

It was an event hedge fund managers could appreciate and afford. It provided a stage for domestic-violence protests in social media and on Las Vegas sidewalks. It was about money, more money, politics, ego and culture. All that and much more were jammed into a circus that would qualify as an event in any year.

But the hype was bigger than a fight that was almost an afterthought amid all the controversy before and after the opening and closing bells.

Final take: It wasn't what a record 4.4 million PPV customers paid to see.

Disappointment punctuated that inflated mix of craziness beneath the big top for Mayweather's unanimously dull decision over Pacquiao. If it was Fight of the Century, it's going to be a long 85 years. May 2 wasn't even Fight of the Month yet it enriched the major players like no prizefight ever has.

Bottom line: Mayweather walked away with at least $220 million, according to ESPN. That's bigger than the Yankees' opening-day payroll ($214 million) for 2015. Pacquiao's check amounted to more than $150 million. Welcome to the filthy rich.

It's the other 99 percent, however, that were left with that PPV bill. Will the disaffected come back?

About 40 lawsuits were filed by customers angry that Pacquiao's shoulder injury was not disclosed before the bout. Al Haymon's PBC might keep fans in the tent with free telecasts. But will consequences of 2015's Event of the Year add up to a steep price that will offset the record revenue? In 2016, we'll find out. ★

RUNNERS UP

PREMIER BOXING CHAMPIONS

The plan is to take boxing out of the pay-per-view shadows and introduce the fighters to a general audience. It's a novel idea. A good one, too. But is it sustainable? Haymon buys network time on a bet that advertising dollars will follow. In 2015, PBC staged 46 shows on NBC, CBS, ESPN, Fox, Spike and Bounce TV or their affiliates. Stay tuned.

TYSON FURY VS. WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

If there was doubt that 2015 was dominated by a changing of the guard, it was eliminated on Nov. 28. Klitschko fell, losing a unanimous decision to Tyson Fury, who had more insults than Donald Trump and enough firepower to dethrone a heavyweight champ unbeaten since 2004.

CANELO ALVAREZ VS. MIGUEL COTTO

In a sign of life after Mayweather-Pacquiao, Canelo staked his claim on being the game's next star with a unanimous decision over Miguel Cotto. The victory was a newfound display of maturity in Canelo, who could encounter his biggest test against Gennady Golovkin in late 2016. The biggest takeaway: The maturing Canelo is also an emerging draw. The PPV for HBO's telecast did a reported 900,000 buys.

MAYWEATHER SAYS GOODBYE

But will he say: "Hello, I'm back?" The question became an event all its own after Mayweather said he was retired – retired for good -- after beating Andre Berto. Since then, there have been repeated assurances that he's happily retired. But there's always that chance to go 50-0. Maybe he gets bored with high-end toys and his pet tiger. Look for the question to become an event in 2016.

MOST INSPIRATIONAL

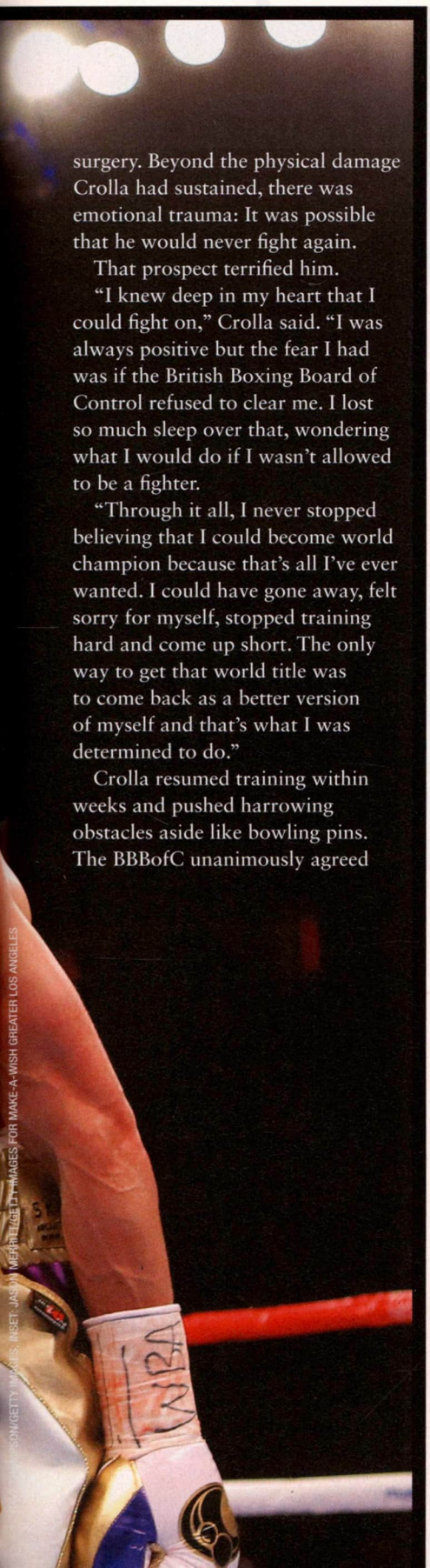
BY TOM GRAY

ANTHONY CROLLA

In horseracing parlance, WBA lightweight titleholder Anthony Crolla is the ultimate "million-to-one shot." Few viewed the polite kid from Manchester, England, as a potential world champion and there were significantly fewer believers after he was battered over the head with a concrete slab while foiling a burglary attempt at a neighbor's home in December 2014.

The diagnosis was nightmarish for an athlete involved in combat sports. A fractured skull and a fractured ankle, the latter of which required

Do you think Anthony Crolla's title-winning victory over Darleys Perez meant a lot to him?



surgery. Beyond the physical damage Crolla had sustained, there was emotional trauma: It was possible that he would never fight again.

That prospect terrified him.

"I knew deep in my heart that I could fight on," Crolla said. "I was always positive but the fear I had was if the British Boxing Board of Control refused to clear me. I lost so much sleep over that, wondering what I would do if I wasn't allowed to be a fighter.

"Through it all, I never stopped believing that I could become world champion because that's all I've ever wanted. I could have gone away, felt sorry for myself, stopped training hard and come up short. The only way to get that world title was to come back as a better version of myself and that's what I was determined to do."

Crolla resumed training within weeks and pushed harrowing obstacles aside like bowling pins. The BBBofC unanimously agreed that he was fit to fight and, aided by promotional outfit Matchroom Boxing, the intensely driven 29-year-old went straight into a world title bout with WBA champion Darleys Perez of Colombia.

Only eight months after his horrifying assault, Crolla turned in a career-best performance and for most ringsiders the title should have changed hands on a hot July night in Manchester. However, when the scorecards were read, every ounce of pain he had endured physically returned as emotional anguish when Perez retained his title on a 12-round majority draw.

Such was the controversy of the decision that a rematch was soon in the making but many felt that Crolla's chance had come and gone. Surely Perez would return to the scene of the crime as a better fighter and retain his title in style? The challenger, who was now in the habit of miracle making, couldn't have been more confident ahead of the November sequel.

The fight was nip-and-tuck for four rounds. Then, in the fifth, Crolla dropped his opponent with a full-impact left hook to the body. The oxygen and ambition were sucked from Perez with one perfectly delivered shot and he never had a chance at beating the count. The new champion wept and a jubilant home crowd exploded, soccer-style.

"If I never boxed again, I've achieved my dream of becoming a world champion," said the affable Crolla. "Now that I have the belt it's all about defending it and making life easy for my family. I want the big fights and I want to be the best world champion that I can possibly be."

Eat your heart out, Rocky Balboa, and make way for Anthony "Million Dollar" Crolla.★

OSCAR DE LA HOYA

De La Hoya fought back following a stint in rehab to take proactive charge of his company. Golden Boy Promotions was the lead promoter for the Miguel Cotto-Canelo Alvarez pay-per-view fight, which turned out to be a monster hit.

AMIR KHAN

The former 140-pound titleholder continues to make trips to his ancestral country of Pakistan following a tragic school massacre in Peshawar in 2014. He also plans to create boxing academies there and expand on a growing interest in the sport.

BOYD MELSON

The junior middleweight prospect from White Plains, New York, donates all his purses to stem cell research in honor of a friend who suffered a spinal cord injury. The 34-year-old southpaw has been inactive of late but will return in 2016.

MAURO RANALLO

The distinctive voice of Showtime Championship Boxing bravely continues to raise awareness for bipolar disorder, with which the 46-year-old Canadian has long battled. Ranallo also is well known as a mixed martial arts broadcaster.

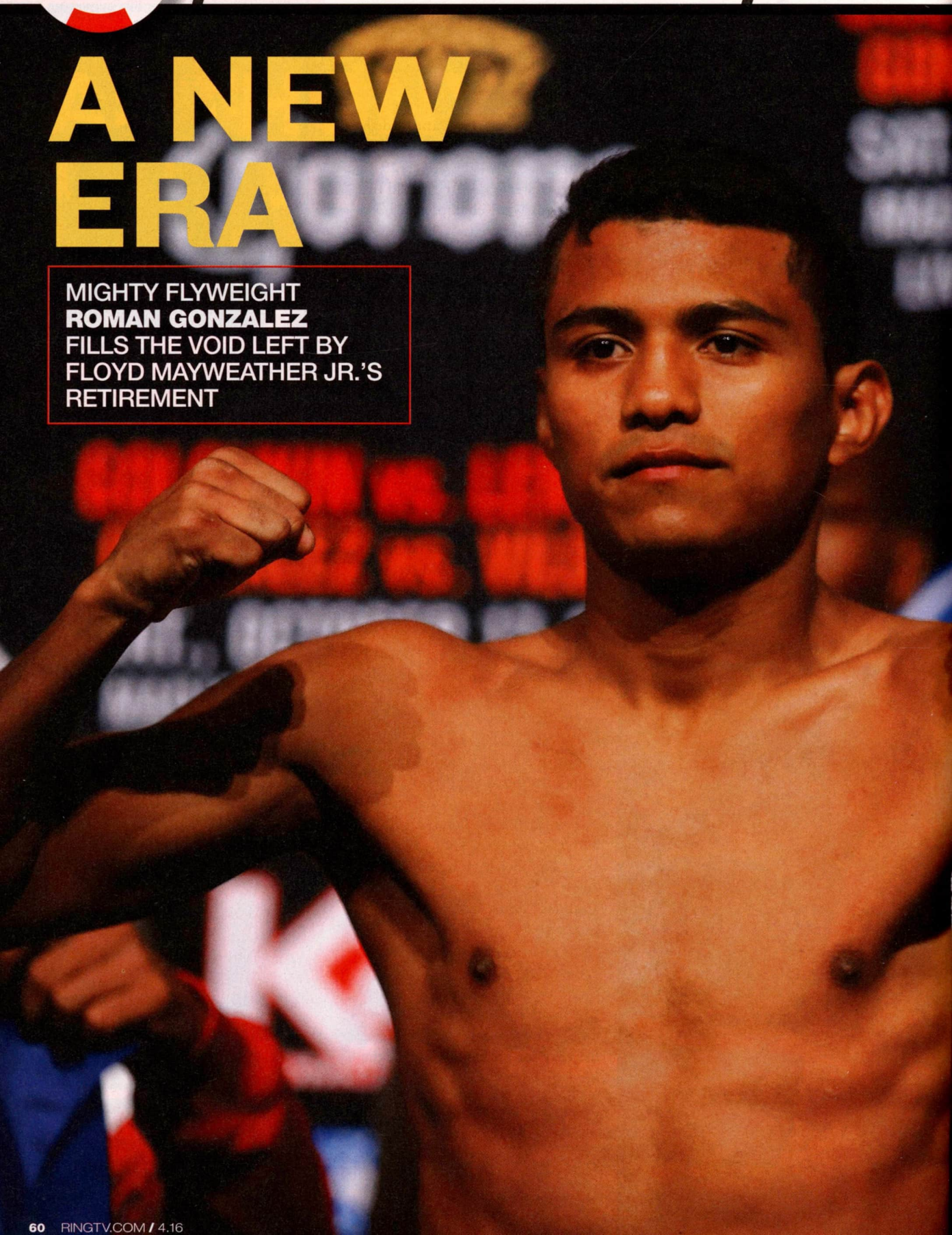
ON/GETTY IMAGES; INSET: JASON MERRITT/GETTY IMAGES FOR MAKE-A-WISH GREATER LOS ANGELES

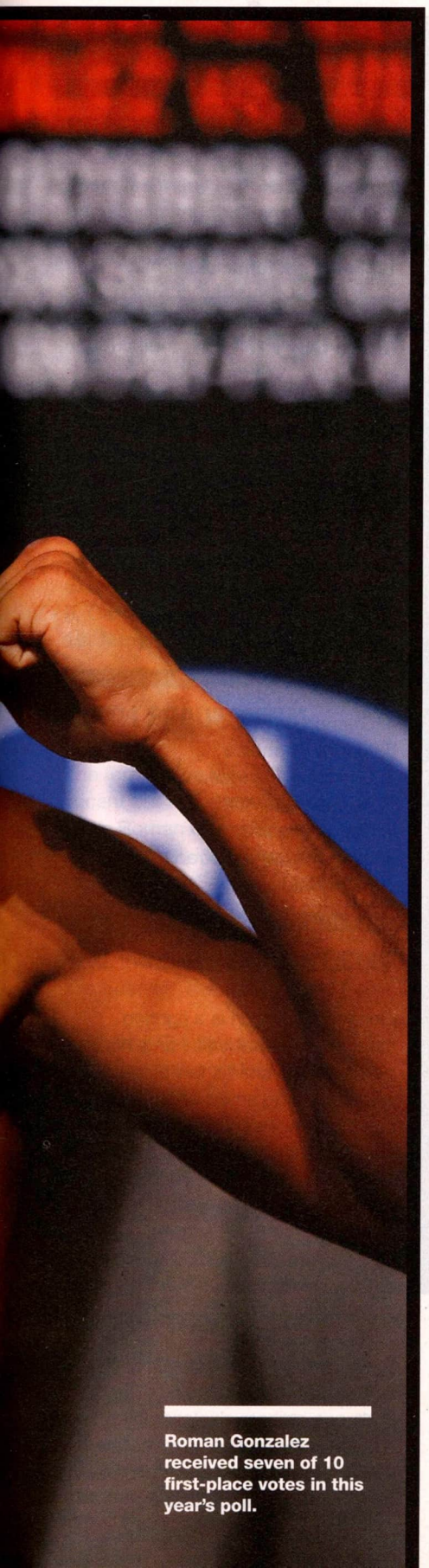
BEST FIGHTER POLL

BY MICHAEL ROSENTHAL

A NEW ERA

MIGHTY FLYWEIGHT **ROMAN GONZALEZ** FILLS THE VOID LEFT BY FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.'S RETIREMENT





Roman Gonzalez received seven of 10 first-place votes in this year's poll.

The retirement of pound-for-pound king Floyd Mayweather Jr. opened the door for another fighter to top the list. And Roman Gonzalez barged right in.

The dominating flyweight from Nicaragua has landed at the top of many pound-for-pound lists, including THE RING's. Thus, it was no surprise that he emerged No. 1 in THE RING's annual Best Fighter Poll for 2015, in which 10 boxing experts from five countries took part.

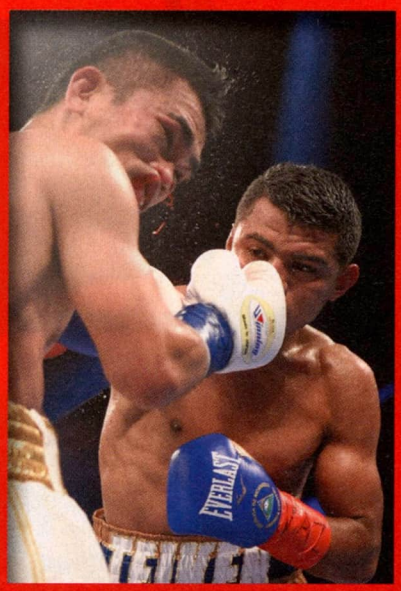
Gonzalez is the first flyweight to be so honored since the poll was instituted in 1980. He received 138 points (out of a possible 150) and seven first-place votes. Gennady Golovkin finished a strong second, with 114 points and the other three first-place votes.

Mayweather had won four consecutive polls and a record seven overall, one more than Roy Jones Jr., who won six total between 1995 and 2003.

Manny Pacquiao finished fifth in the poll with 50 points, his ninth appearance in the Top 10. That equals Julio Cesar Chavez, Oscar De La Hoya, Ricardo Lopez and Pernell Whitaker for No. 4 all time. Mayweather was in a record 15 Top 10s over 16 years, followed by Jones with 12 and Bernard Hopkins with 10.

Four fighters dropped out of the Top 10 from last year: Mayweather, Wladimir Klitschko (No. 3 last year), Juan Manuel Marquez (No. 7 last year) and Miguel Cotto (No. 10 last year). They were replaced by Canelo Alvarez (No. 6), Terence Crawford (No. 7), Tim Bradley (No. 9) and Juan Francisco Estrada (No. 10).

In the poll, the fighters received points for each vote they received: 15 points for a first-place vote, 12 for second, nine for third, seven for fourth, six for fifth, five for sixth, four for seventh, three for eighth, two for ninth and one for 10th. ★



1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ** 138 (7)
2. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN** 114 (3)
3. **SERGEY KOVALEV** 80
4. **ANDRE WARD** 63
5. **MANNY PACQUIAO** 50
6. **CANELO ALVAREZ** 47
7. **TERENCE CRAWFORD** 40
8. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX** 39
9. **TIM BRADLEY** 38
10. **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA** 10

OTHERS RECEIVING VOTES

TAKASHI UCHIYAMA 7, WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO 3, KEITH THURMAN 3, KELL BROOK 2, VASYL LOMACHENKO 2, LEO SANTA CRUZ 2, NAOYA INOUE 1, SHINSUKE YAMANAKA 1.

FIRST-PLACE VOTES ARE IN PARENTHESES.

THE BEST OF 2015

BEST FIGHTER POLL

BY MICHAEL ROSENTHAL

The voters showed Gennady Golovkin a great deal of respect.

RON BORGES

BOSTON HERALD

Gennady Golovkin has the highest knockout rate among active world champions (34-0, 31 knockouts), is on a 21-fight KO streak and is willing to go down to 154 or up to 168 to fight the best available contenders. Some say he's untested but who with the ability to test him is willing to face him?

1. Gennady Golovkin
2. Sergey Kovalev
3. Roman Gonzalez
4. Guillermo Rigondeaux
5. Canelo Alvarez
6. Terence Crawford
7. Andre Ward
8. Keith Thurman
9. Kell Brook
10. Shinsuke Yamanaka

MIKE COPPINGER

USA TODAY

The Nicaraguan was always second to Floyd Mayweather Jr. but he hadn't received proper recognition because his fights went unseen on American airwaves. That changed last year with an electrifying performance on HBO and a KO of Brian Viloria on pay-per-view. Gonzalez does it all.

1. Roman Gonzalez
2. Andre Ward
3. Sergey Kovalev
4. Gennady Golovkin
5. Manny Pacquiao
6. Guillermo Rigondeaux
7. Terence Crawford
8. Canelo Alvarez
9. Juan Francisco Estrada
10. Tim Bradley

GARETH A DAVIES

THE (LONDON) TELEGRAPH

Gennady Golovkin is a fighting machine who has it all: hunts his prey, power off the charts, fan-pleaser, prepared to go anywhere to fight and stays active. The next year should see the Kazakhstani in a superfight or two. He is also a great ambassador for the sport of boxing.

1. Gennady Golovkin
2. Roman Gonzalez
3. Sergey Kovalev
4. Andre Ward
5. Guillermo Rigondeaux
6. Terence Crawford
7. Canelo Alvarez
8. Manny Pacquiao
9. Tim Bradley
10. Juan Francisco Estrada

NAOKI FUKUDA

COREY ERDMAN

THE RING

There are many high-level fighters on this list with the capability of dominating over a long period of time against elite opposition but "Chocolatito" is the one who has actually done it. Results trump speculation.

1. Roman Gonzalez
2. Andre Ward
3. Gennady Golovkin
4. Guillermo Rigondeaux
5. Manny Pacquiao
6. Tim Bradley
7. Terence Crawford
8. Sergey Kovalev
9. Canelo Alvarez
10. Naoya Inoue

NORM FRAUENHEIM

THE RING

The temptation is to leave No. 1 vacant but that's too gimmicky. So leave Roman Gonzalez at the top. He's got it all, including 10 more victories than Gennady Golovkin. But GGG-Canelo Alvarez and/or Sergey Kovalev-Andre Ward could make this debate as interesting as it has been in years.

1. Roman Gonzalez
2. Gennady Golovkin
3. Sergey Kovalev
4. Terence Crawford
5. Takashi Uchiyama
6. Canelo Alvarez
7. Manny Pacquiao
8. Andre Ward
9. Leo Santa Cruz
10. Juan Francisco Estrada

NICK GIONGCO

MANILA (PHILIPPINES) BULLETIN

Roman Gonzalez's sterling showing against Brian Viloria proved that he is a cut above the rest. My second and third spots are interchangeable. Manny Pacquiao at No. 4 is legitimate despite his loss to Floyd Mayweather Jr. But Pacquiao has to win big in his next fight or else.

1. Roman Gonzalez
2. Gennady Golovkin
3. Canelo Alvarez
4. Manny Pacquiao
5. Andre Ward
6. Terence Crawford
7. Sergey Kovalev
8. Tim Bradley
9. Guillermo Rigondeaux
10. Juan Francisco Estrada

GUNNAR MEINHARDT

DIE WELT (GERMANY)

Gennady Golovkin is like no other fighter. He wins impressively and by knockout each time he fights. To do more is not possible. He is the most complete fighter in the world. To see him demonstrate his skills in the ring is to truly enjoy the art of boxing.

1. Gennady Golovkin
2. Roman Gonzalez
3. Sergey Kovalev
4. Canelo Alvarez
5. Manny Pacquiao
6. Tim Bradley
7. Guillermo Rigondeaux
8. Terence Crawford
9. Wladimir Klitschko
10. Andre Ward

DAN RAFAEL

ESPN.COM

Roman Gonzalez's package of skills, power and speed is obvious. He does everything well. To me he's a mixture of two all-time greats: Ricardo Lopez and the late Alexis Arguello, who once trained Gonzalez. Also, Gonzalez has dominated from strawweight to flyweight against quality opposition.

1. Roman Gonzalez
2. Gennady Golovkin
3. Sergey Kovalev
4. Manny Pacquiao
5. Tim Bradley
6. Canelo Alvarez
7. Terence Crawford
8. Andre Ward
9. Vasyl Lomachenko
10. Wladimir Klitschko

RICK REENO

BOXINGSCENE.COM

Gonzalez has been an unstoppable force through three weight divisions, looking more impressive as he moves up in weight. He's getting that Mayweather aura about him, where he's so good that fans are calling for him to fight top-tier boxers who are one, two and three divisions above him.

1. Roman Gonzalez
2. Andre Ward
3. Sergey Kovalev
4. Tim Bradley
5. Manny Pacquiao
6. Gennady Golovkin
7. Guillermo Rigondeaux
8. Juan Francisco Estrada
9. Terence Crawford
10. Takashi Uchiyama

SALVADOR RODRIGUEZ

ESPN DEPORTES (MEXICO)

Roman Gonzalez now has the most impressive package in boxing: talent, power, technique, discipline and humility. The new face of boxing could be the third fighter in the smallest weight division to make $1 million for a fight, after Chiquita Gonzalez and Michael Carbajal.

1. Roman Gonzalez
2. Gennady Golovkin
3. Tim Bradley
4. Sergey Kovalev
5. Canelo Alvarez
6. Manny Pacquiao
7. Guillermo Rigondeaux
8. Andre Ward
9. Juan Francisco Estrada
10. Terence Crawford

PAST POLLS

2014 POLL

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr. 150 (10)
2. Manny Pacquiao 89
3. Wladimir Klitschko 71
4. Roman Gonzalez 64
5. Guillermo Rigondeaux 61
6. Gennady Golovkin 43
7. Juan Manuel Marquez 35
8. Andre Ward 28
9. Sergey Kovalev 26
10. Miguel Cotto 21

2013 POLL

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 150 (10)
2. Andre Ward – 117
3. Tim Bradley – 62
4T. Juan Manuel Marquez – 53
4T. Manny Pacquiao – 53
6. Wladimir Klitschko – 48
7. Sergio Martinez – 47
8. Guillermo Rigondeaux – 45
9. Gennady Golovkin – 28
10T. Danny Garcia – 9
10T. Mikey Garcia – 9

2012 POLL

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 136 (7)
2. Andre Ward – 109 (1)
3. Juan Manuel Marquez – 82
4. Sergio Martinez – 76
5. Nonito Donaire – 53
6. Manny Pacquiao – 48
7. Wladimir Klitschko – 33
8. Vitali Klitschko – 18
9T. Timothy Bradley – 14
9T. Carl Froch – 14

2011 POLL

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 136.5 (6)
2. Manny Pacquiao – 127.5 (4)
3. Sergio Martinez – 80
4. Andre Ward – 65
5. Juan Manuel Marquez – 57
6. Nonito Donaire – 53
7. Wladimir Klitschko – 33
8T. Timothy Bradley – 19
8T. Pongsaklek Wonjongkam – 19
10. Lucian Bute – 11

2010 POLL

1. Manny Pacquiao – 150
2. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 117
3. Juan Manuel Marquez – 76
4. Sergio Martinez – 68
5. Andre Ward – 48
6. Nonito Donaire – 41
7. Tim Bradley – 27
8. Bernard Hopkins – 24
9. Juan Manuel Lopez – 21
10. Wladimir Klitschko – 20

2009 POLL

1. Manny Pacquiao – 144
2. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 126
3. Shane Mosley – 79
4. Bernard Hopkins – 61
5. Chad Dawson – 48
6. Paul Williams – 42
7. Juan Manuel Marquez – 40
8. Nonito Donaire – 22
9. Ivan Calderon – 15
10. Arthur Abraham – 14

2008 POLL

1. Manny Pacquiao – 150
2. Joe Calzaghe – 101
3. Juan Manuel Marquez – 99
4. Bernard Hopkins – 73
5. Antonio Margarito – 52
6. Israel Vazquez – 50
7. Rafael Marquez –31
8. Miguel Cotto – 28
9T. Ricky Hatton – 18
9T. Paul Williams – 18

2007 POLL

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 150
2. Manny Pacquiao – 103
3. Joe Calzaghe – 83
4. Bernard Hopkins – 63
5. Juan Manuel Marquez – 58
6. Miguel Cotto – 51
7. Israel Vazquez – 30
8. Kelly Pavlik – 21
9. Winky Wright – 15
10T. Juan Diaz – 13
10T. Oscar De La Hoya – 13

2006 POLL

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 141
2. Manny Pacquiao – 129
3. Winky Wright – 84
4. Jermain Taylor – 61
5. Joe Calzaghe – 49
6. Rafael Marquez – 28
7. Ricky Hatton – 23
8. Shane Mosley – 20
9. Jose Luis Castillo – 19
10. Bernard Hopkins – 16

2005 POLL

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 144
2. Winky Wright – 113
3. Marco Antonio Barrera – 70
4. Juan Manuel Marquez – 43
5. Rafael Marquez – 39
6. Ricky Hatton – 38
7. Jose Luis Castillo – 36
8. Jermain Taylor – 34
9. Zab Judah – 31
10. Antonio Tarver – 30

2004 POLL

1. Bernard Hopkins – 150
2. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 111
3. Kostya Tszyu – 88
4. Winky Wright – 70
5. Marco Antonio Barrera – 52
6. Manny Pacquiao – 38
7. Erik Morales – 26
8. Juan Manuel Marquez – 25
9. Felix Trinidad – 22
10T. Diego Corrales – 11
10T. Rafael Marquez –11

2003 POLL

1. Roy Jones – 142
2. Bernard Hopkins – 114
3. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 97
4. Shane Mosley – 53
5. Kostya Tszyu – 48
6. Oscar De La Hoya – 45
7. Manny Pacquiao – 38
8. James Toney – 35
9. Erik Morales – 31
10. Lennox Lewis – 22

2002 POLL

1. Roy Jones – 135
2. Oscar De La Hoya – 89
3T. Marco Antonio Barrera – 78
3T. Vernon Forrest – 78
3T. Bernard Hopkins – 78
6. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 45
7. Lennox Lewis – 43
8. Kostya Tszyu – 42
9. Erik Morales – 25
10. Shane Mosley – 13

2001 POLL

1. Shane Mosley – 132
2. Roy Jones – 108
3. Bernard Hopkins – 98
4. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 77
5. Marco Antonio Barrera – 44
6. Oscar De La Hoya – 40
7. Felix Trinidad – 39
8. Kostya Tszyu – 34
9. Lennox Lewis – 23
10. Ricardo Lopez – 22

2000 POLL

1. Felix Trinidad – 126
2. Shane Mosley – 123
3. Roy Jones – 109
4. Oscar De La Hoya – 43
5. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 39
6. Naseem Hamed – 37
7. Ricardo Lopez – 35
8. Diego Corrales – 33
9. Bernard Hopkins – 32
10. Lennox Lewis – 31

1999 POLL

1. Roy Jones – 150
2. Oscar De La Hoya – 85
3. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 78
4T. Shane Mosley – 68
4T. Felix Trinidad – 68
6T. Mark Johnson – 47
6T. Ricardo Lopez – 47
8. Erik Morales – 21
9. Bernard Hopkins – 16
10. Fernando Vargas – 15

1998 POLL

1. Roy Jones – 141
2. Oscar De La Hoya – 123
3. Felix Trinidad – 67
4. Shane Mosley – 65
5. Evander Holyfield – 55
6. Mark Johnson – 45
7. Naseem Hamed – 33
8. Ricardo Lopez – 23
9. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 19
10. Pernell Whitaker – 14

1997 POLL

1. Oscar De La Hoya – 123
2. Roy Jones – 117
3. Ricardo Lopez – 83
4. Evander Holyfield – 80
5. Felix Trinidad – 65
6. Pernell Whitaker – 37
7. Naseem Hamed – 28

8T. Mark Johnson – 22
8T. Junior Jones – 22
10. Johnny Tapia – 18

1996 POLL

1. Roy Jones – 123
2. Oscar De La Hoya – 107
3. Pernell Whitaker – 92
4. Evander Holyfield – 64
5. Felix Trinidad – 59
6. Ricardo Lopez – 56
7. Terry Norris – 28
8. Ike Quartey – 21
9. Azumah Nelson – 12
10. Yuri Arbachakov – 11

1995 POLL

1. Roy Jones – 138
2. Pernell Whitaker – 126
3. Oscar De La Hoya – 74
4. Felix Trinidad – 59
5. Marco Antonio Barrera – 48
6. Riddick Bowe – 44
7. Ricardo Lopez – 37
8. Julio Cesar Chavez – 18
9. Ike Quartey – 16
10. Naseem Hamed – 12

1994 POLL

1. Pernell Whitaker – 130
2. Roy Jones – 129
3. Frankie Randall – 53
4. Ricardo Lopez – 45
5. Orlando Canizales – 39
6. Chiquita Gonzalez – 38
7. James Toney – 36
8. Gerald McClellan – 33
9. Felix Trinidad –29
10. Kevin Kelley – 28

1993 POLL

1. Pernell Whitaker – 147
2. Julio Cesar Chavez – 86
3. Terry Norris – 84
4. James Toney – 76
5. Michael Carbajal – 39
6. Evander Holyfield – 36
7. Buddy McGirt – 28
8. Roy Jones – 23
9. Orlando Canizales – 22
10. Ricardo Lopez – 21

1992 POLL

1. Julio Cesar Chavez – 136
2. Terry Norris – 91
3. Pernell Whitaker – 85
4. Buddy McGirt – 60
5. Riddick Bowe – 45
6. Orlando Canizales – 36
7. Azumah Nelson –34
8. Lennox Lewis – 24
9. Julian Jackson – 18

10T. Roy Jones – 15
10T. Mike McCallum – 15

1991 POLL

1. Julio Cesar Chavez – 138
2. Pernell Whitaker – 100
3. Evander Holyfield – 78
4. Mike Tyson – 55
5. Meldrick Taylor – 48
6. Mike McCallum – 38
7. Thomas Hearns – 34
8. Khaosai Galaxy – 25
9. Terry Norris – 22
10. Simon Brown – 21

1990 POLL

1. Julio Cesar Chavez – 123
2. Pernell Whitaker – 104
3. Mike Tyson – 71
4. Meldrick Taylor – 57
5. Buster Douglas – 51
6. Simon Brown – 27
7. Antonio Esparragoza – 25
8. Michael Nunn – 23
9. Evander Holyfield – 21
10. Humberto Gonzalez – 14

1989 POLL

1. Mike Tyson – 147
2. Julio Cesar Chavez – 91
3. Meldrick Taylor – 61
4. Michael Nunn – 60
5. Evander Holyfield – 56
6. Pernell Whitaker – 46
7. Ray Leonard – 28
8. Jeff Fenech – 27
9. Azumah Nelson – 18
10. Marlon Starling – 16

1988 POLL

1. Mike Tyson – 144
2. Julio Cesar Chavez – 118
3. Evander Holyfield – 66
4. Ray Leonard – 55
5. Jeff Fenech – 44
6. Michael Nunn – 33
7. Azumah Nelson – 32
8. Jung-Koo Chang – 23
9. Buddy McGirt – 21
10. Sumbu Kalambay – 18

NO POLL IN 1987

1986 POLL

1. Marvin Hagler – 138
2. Mike Tyson – 92
3. Donald Curry – 59
4. Thomas Hearns – 52
5. Edwin Rosario – 47

6T. Azumah Nelson – 45
6T. Michael Spinks – 45
8. Evander Holyfield – 32
9. Julio Cesar Chavez – 26
10. Hector Camacho – 22

1985 POLL

1. Marvin Hagler – 150
2. Hector Camacho – 86
3. Michael Spinks – 85
4. Donald Curry – 78
5. Thomas Hearns – 42
6. Barry McGuigan – 32
7. Milton McCrory – 25

8T. Julio Cesar Chavez – 22
8T. Pinklon Thomas – 22
10. Larry Holmes – 21

1984 POLL

1. Marvin Hagler – 112
2. Aaron Pryor – 77
3. Larry Holmes –72
4. Eusebio Pedroza – 66
5. Hector Camacho – 50

6T. Jeff Chandler – 47
6T. Ray Leonard – 47
8. Michael Spinks – 45
9. Thomas Hearns – 34
10. Donald Curry – 26

1983 POLL

1. Marvin Hagler – 147
2. Aaron Pryor – 93
3. Larry Holmes – 91
4. Michael Spinks – 66
5. Jeff Chandler – 57
6. Thomas Hearns – 45
7. Alexis Arguello – 29
8. Wilfredo Gomez – 28
9. Hector Camacho – 24
10. Eusebio Pedroza – 12

1982 POLL

1. Ray Leonard – 147
2. Alexis Arguello – 97
3. Marvin Hagler – 76
4. Salvador Sanchez – 72
5. Wilfred Benitez – 68
6. Larry Holmes – 61
7. Jeff Chandler – 25
8. Eusebio Pedroza – 18
9. Aaron Pryor – 17

10T. Thomas Hearns – 14
10T. Dwight Muhammad Qawi – 14

1981 POLL

1. Thomas Hearns – 116
2. Ray Leonard – 108
3. Marvin Hagler –76
4. Larry Holmes – 75
5. Alexis Arguello – 62
6. Wilfredo Gomez – 58
7. Eddie Mustafa Muhammad –28
8. Matthew Saad Muhammad – 24
9. Wilfred Benitez – 18

10T. Roberto Duran – 13
10T. Aaron Pryor – 13

1980 POLL

1. Roberto Duran – 96
2. Ray Leonard – 93
3. Wilfredo Gomez – 88
4. Danny Lopez – 65
5. Pipino Cuevas – 54
6. Alexis Arguello – 40
7. Larry Holmes – 32
8. Wilfred Benitez – 26

9T. Vito Antuofermo – 25
9T. Matthew Saad Muhammad – 25

THE BEST OF 2015

BY DAVID GREISMAN

HIGHLY UNOFFICIAL AWARDS

ZACHARY "ZUNGRY" OCHOA AWARD FOR WORST NICKNAME Junior middleweight Joey "Twinkle Fingers" Hernandez.

MOST CLICHE BOXING MOVIE "Southpaw."

MOST AGGRAVATING EXCUSE Fighters who want potential opponents to earn a fight with them but then go on to face someone even less deserving instead.

EASIEST PATH TO FOUR WORLD TITLES Adrien Broner.

BIGGEST UPSET Broner successfully fulfilling a vow of silence prior to his win over Khabib Allakhverdiev after that shot at a vacant title was criticized.

PERSON WE MOST WISH HAD TAKEN BRONER'S VOW OF SILENCE Teddy Atlas.

UP GOES FRAZIER! UP GOES FRAZIER! Smokin' Joe was finally commemorated with a statue in Philadelphia.

BERNARD HOPKINS "BEST MIDDLE-AGED BOXER" AWARD Female fighter Alicia Ashley, 48 years old and once again a titleholder at 122 pounds.

BOXER MUCH BETTER AT MMA THAN JAMES TONEY Holly Holm.

ONE OF JAY Z'S 99 PROBLEMS Making a star out of Guillermo Rigondeaux.

LINEAL 155-POUND CHAMPION Canelo Alvarez.

LAURENCE COLE AWARD FOR BAD REFEREEING Laurence Cole, for his work in Omar Figueroa vs. Ricky Burns.

MOST SURPRISING THING ABOUT MAYWEATHER-PACQUIAO It happened.

LEAST SURPRISING THING ABOUT MAYWEATHER-PACQUIAO What happened once it happened.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER MAYWEATHER-PACQUIAO Pacquiao blamed his shoulder.

WHAT SHOULD'VE HAPPENED AFTER MAYWEATHER-PACQUIAO Pacquiao shouldering the blame.

FIGHTERS WHO RECENTLY LANDED MORE PUNCHES ON MAYWEATHER THAN PACQUIAO Marcos Maidana (221 in the first fight and 122 in the rematch), Canelo Alvarez (117), Robert Guerrero (113), Miguel Cotto (105), Shane Mosley (92) and even Andre Berto (83); Pacquiao landed 81.

AMOUNT MAYWEATHER EARNED ON MAY 2 At least $220 million.

AMOUNT THE LAST PERSON TO BEAT MAYWEATHER LIVES ON $435 a month from Serafim Todorov's pension, according to what the 1996 Olympic silver medalist told The New York Times.

LEAST SURPRISING THING ABOUT MAYWEATHER-BERTO That only between 400,000 and 550,000 people paid for it.

MOST SURPRISING THING ABOUT MAYWEATHER BERTO That 400,000 to 550,000 people actually paid for it.

MOST THANKED Al Haymon.

FIGHTER MOST ON THE RECEIVING END OF CHARITY Chris Arreola, who was quite fortunate to go 2-0-1 on the scorecards this year against Curtis Harper, Fred Kassi and Travis Kauffman.

FIGHTER MOST ON THE GIVING END OF CHARITY Amir Khan, whose philanthropic efforts continue to help those in need in several countries.

MOST FITTING NAME FOR A HEAVYWEIGHT Tyson Fury.

BUTTERBEAN AWARD FOR LEAST FIT HEAVYWEIGHT "Bronco" Billy Wright, a 51-year-old listed at 6-foot-4 and anywhere between 313 and 325 pounds in 2015.

TYSON FURY "SELF-UPPERCUTTING HEAVYWEIGHT" AWARD Wladimir Klitschko socked himself instead of Bryant Jennings.

MOST LIKELY TO RECEIVE A RESTRAINING ORDER Shannon Briggs.

LENNOX LEWIS "SURPRISINGLY BAD

AT COMMENTARY" AWARD Sugar Ray Leonard on NBC's Premier Boxing Champions cards – there as a celebrity but not with substance.

NO LONGER AS SHARP AS HE USED TO BE Former heavyweight contender Donovan "Razor" Ruddock, knocked out at age 51 by an 8-2 fighter named Dillon Carman.

LEAST SURPRISING COMEBACK David Haye.

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR. "WORST DISCIPLINE" AWARD (Tie) Roberto Garcia and Frankie Gomez, each overweight for two fights apiece in 2015, each having one of those fights canceled.

WASHINGTON GENERALS 100, HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS 99 AWARD British fighter Robin Deakin won his first bout back in 2006 and then lost 51 in a row before beating Deniss Kornilovs on points in August. Deakin hasn't fought since.

POLITICIAN MASQUERADING AS A BOXER Mitt Romney stepped into the ring with Evander Holyfield for charity.

BOXER MASQUERADING AS A POLITICIAN Manny Pacquiao, who was actually present in the House of Representatives of the Philippines for four days in 2014 and deemed present for another three — a total of seven out of the 70 days the legislative body met.

ARROYO OF THE YEAR McJoe.

CHARLO OF THE YEAR Jermall.

DIRRELL OF THE YEAR Anthony.

BIG DRAMA SHOW Gennady Golovkin.

NO DRAMA SHOW Too many of the televised fights in 2015.

NUMBER OF WBA SUPER, REGULAR AND INTERIM "TITLEHOLDERS" 42 among the 17 divisions.

THE REAL "ONE PUNCH" AT WELTERWEIGHT Randall Bailey, still potent with his power, knocked out Shusaku Fujinaka with a single left hook in South Korea.

NATE CAMPBELL "WORST-TIMED TAUNT" AWARD Jerry Belmontes stuck his tongue out and then got knocked out by Jason Sosa.

PUTTING THE MAGIC IN "MAGIC MAN" Antonio Tarver, who tested positive for a banned substance for the second time in his career.

VAZQUEZ-MARQUEZ IV AWARD FOR SADDEST END TO A GREAT SERIES Brandon Rios vs. Mike Alvarado III, which, like the final Vazquez-Marquez fight, lasted just three rounds.

ROBERT GUERRERO "WORST-TIMED GUN ARREST" AWARD Alvarado, pulled over at 4 a.m. and charged with illegal firearm possession just three weeks before his third fight with Rios.

JOURNEYMAN OF THE YEAR Aron Martinez, perhaps robbed against Robert Guerrero in June but then triumphant against Devon Alexander in October. Close runner-up: heavyweight Fred Kassi.

A. WARD AWARD Andre Ward.

HENRY AKINWANDE "EXCESSIVE HOLDING" AWARD Terrance Smith, who saw that option as better than continuing to be punched by cruiserweight prospect Murat Gassiev.

FIGHTER WHO SHOULD'VE WON THE AKINWANDE AWARD INSTEAD Amnat Ruenroeng, the flyweight titleholder whose blatant holding throughout his win over Johnriel Casimero wasn't penalized until the 11th round. One clinch was allowed to last a ridiculous 32 seconds.

"TITANIC" AWARD FOR THE ENDING EVERYONE SAW COMING 50 Cent's boxing promotional firm going bankrupt.

IT'S NOT THEIR HEARING WE'RE WORRIED ABOUT The WBC had judges test noise-reducing headphones to filter out distractions.

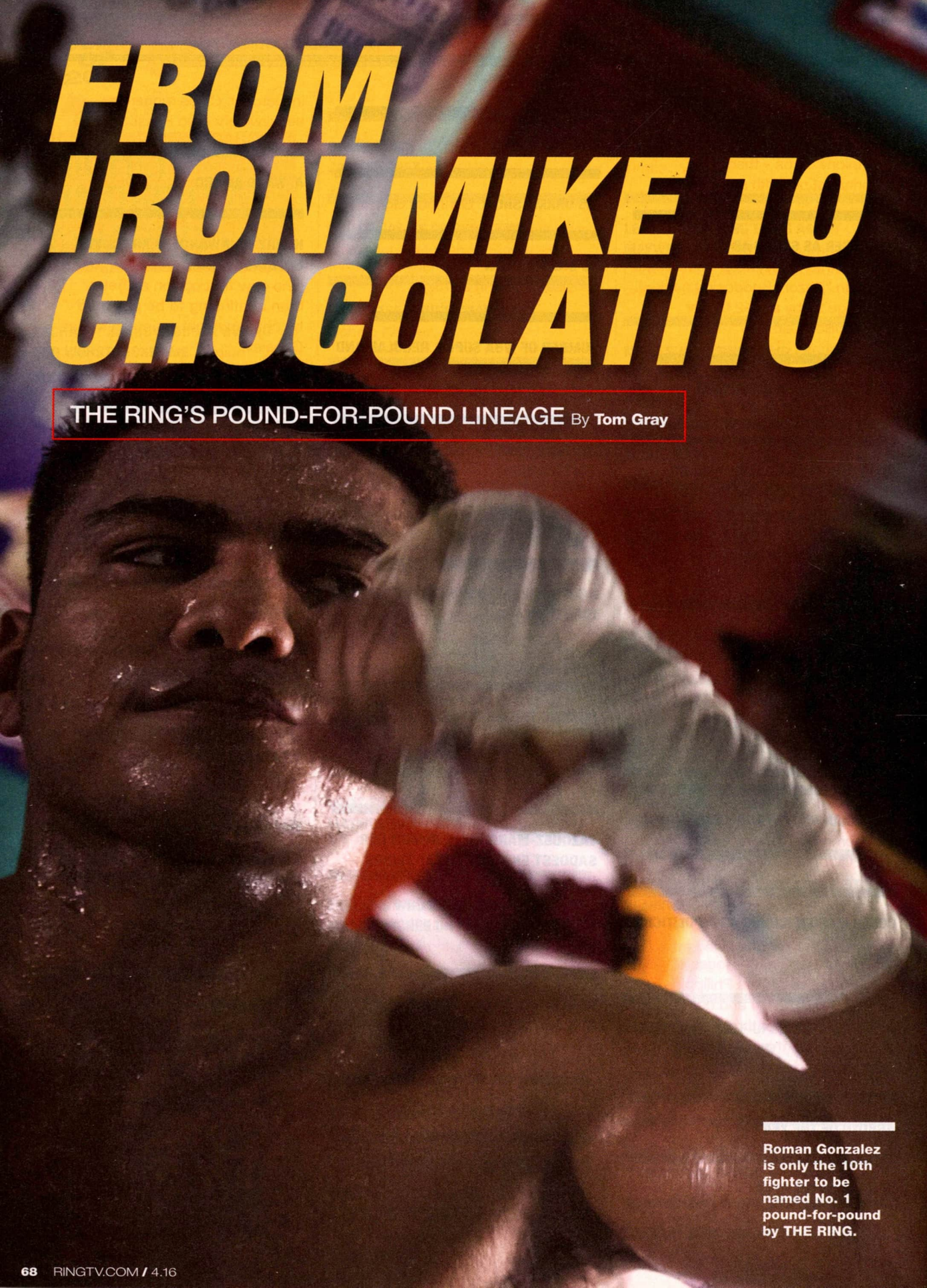
LANGUAGES YOU NEED TO KNOW TO COVER BOXING
English, French, German, Japanese, Polish, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai and James Toney.

MOST IRONIC When the International Boxing Hall of Fame has championship belts stolen in a burglary, it's a crime. But when a boxer loses a title in a robbery, it's boxing.

FOR PAST WINNERS OF THE ANNUAL RING AWARDS, GO TO http://bit.ly/past-winners OR SCAN THE QR CODE.

FROM IRON MIKE TO CHOCOLATITO

THE RING'S POUND-FOR-POUND LINEAGE By **Tom Gray**



Roman Gonzalez is only the 10th fighter to be named No. 1 pound-for-pound by THE RING.

In the wake of Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s retirement, Roman "Chocolatito" Gonzalez was installed as THE RING'S No. 1 fighter pound for pound.

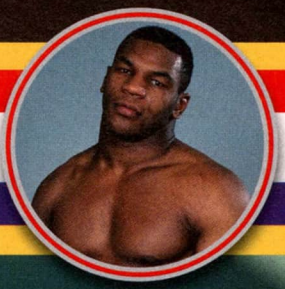
The unbeaten Nicaraguan, a three-weight world titleholder, is 44-0 (38 knockouts) and his breathtaking skillset and rapidly expanding reputation have shone a refreshing spotlight on a normally non-profitable flyweight division.

Over the past 26 years there have been 10 fighters, including Gonzalez, anointed as pound-for-pound king by THE RING. The following is a list of those before Gonzalez who reached the pinnacle of their sport.

BEST OF THE BEST Only 10 fighters have been rated No. 1 pound-for-pound by THE RING. Here is the order in which they reigned: **Mike Tyson:** 1989-90; **Julio Cesar Chavez:** 1990-93; **Pernell Whitaker:** 1993-96; **Roy Jones Jr.:** 1996; **Whitaker:** 1996-97; **Oscar De La Hoya:** 1997-99; **Jones:** 1999-2000; **Shane Mosley:** 2000-02; **Bernard Hopkins:** 2002-03; **Jones:** 2003-04; **Hopkins:** 2004-05; **Floyd Mayweather Jr.:** 2005-07; **Manny Pacquiao:** 2007-12; **Mayweather Jr:** 2012-2015; **Roman Gonzalez:** 2015-present

Note: The No. 1 spot was vacant for one month in 2012.

MIKE TYSON



Record: 50-6, 44 KOs • **Accomplishments:** Former undisputed heavyweight champion • **Reign at No. 1:** 1989-90

At only 20 years old in November 1986, the Brooklyn native destroyed then-WBC titleholder Trevor Berbick in two rounds to become the youngest heavyweight champion in history. He would unify the division with points wins over James "Bonecrusher" Smith (WBA titleholder) and Tony Tucker (IBF titleholder) before smashing THE RING heavyweight champion Michael Spinks inside one round. His 10th-round knockout loss to Buster Douglas in February 1990 shocked the world and marked the beginning of Tyson's decline even though he was only 23. At his peak, Tyson was deadly and struck pure fear into the heart of the glamour division. However, a common criticism of the Hall of Famer is that he never defeated another great heavyweight at the peak of that opponent's powers. Larry Holmes was over the hill and Spinks, a great light heavyweight, was merely a splinter for the rampaging Tyson.

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ

Record: 107-6-2, 86 KOs • **Accomplishments:** Former three-weight world champion • **Reign at No. 1:** 1990-93

Only weeks after Tyson's loss to Douglas, Julio Cesar Chavez, the WBC junior welterweight champion from Mexico, found himself in against the flashy and immensely gifted Meldrick Taylor, an Olympic gold medalist for the United States and reigning IBF titleholder. The lightning-quick American was as good as it gets for huge portions of the contest, nailing his man with rapid clusters of punches while slipping off to the sides to keep Chavez turning. As the championship rounds commenced, the super-tough warrior from Culiacan suddenly began to land crunching shots to Taylor's grotesquely swollen face and he continued to apply steady pressure. The American was dropped by a big right hand in the 12th and final round but referee Richard Steele's decision to stop the contest with just two seconds remaining is regarded as one of the most controversial calls in the history of the sport. The '90s were just underway and we had arguably witnessed the fight of the decade.

PERNELL WHITAKER

Record: 40-4-1, 17 KOs • **Accomplishments:** Former four-weight world champion • **Reign at No. 1:** 1993-96, 1996-97

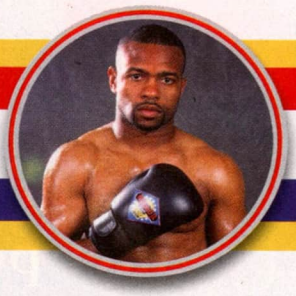
The former undisputed lightweight king, arguably the greatest defensive fighter in boxing history, had his share of critics due to a lack of punching power but his genius and sophistication were undeniable. Like Chavez, Whitaker had annexed championships at different weights and was enjoying his time as WBC welterweight titleholder. A lucrative bout with Chavez had been discussed for years and the pair finally collided in September 1993 at the Alamodome in San Antonio. It was all Whitaker for the vast majority of the rounds and this time there would be no fairytale ending for Chavez, who punched holes through the air as his opponent skipped and squatted around him. The bout was officially declared a majority draw but it was a bogus decision and "Sweet Pea" would take the Mexican's pound-for-pound title as well as his pride.

OSCAR DE LA HOYA

Record: 39-6, 30 KOs • **Accomplishments:** Former six-weight world champion • **Reign at No. 1:** 1997-99

Likable, naturally charismatic and he could fight like hell. That combination juxtaposed alongside a rare hunger to take on all comers saw Oscar De La Hoya smash pay-per-view records. "The Golden Boy" had already chewed up the remains of Julio Cesar Chavez with a bloody fourth-round TKO victory in June 1996 to claim his third world title when he made the decision to target a fiercely competitive 147-pound division ruled by the great Whitaker. Facing "Sweet Pea" for his welterweight debut in April 1997 almost proved costly. Invigorated with a real threat in front of him, Whitaker turned in his finest display in years. De La Hoya had success, particularly with the right lead, but his signature left hook was rendered useless. At the end of 12 rounds the majority of experts had a close fight going either way but De La Hoya prevailed by wide margins; 115-111, 116-110, 116-110. Boxing had a new pound-for-pound star.

ROY JONES JR.



Record: 62-9, 45 KOs • **Accomplishments:** Former four-weight world champion • **Reign at No. 1:** 1996, 1999-2000, 2003-04

Jones was in the pound-for-pound discussion from the moment he outpointed James Toney in November 1994 but a disqualification loss to Montel Griffin three years later and a lack of big fights frequently led to him being leapfrogged by the smaller fighters of his era. No particular victory bolstered his status; it was just that Jones could do things that no other fighter could. A former titleholder at 160 and 168 pounds and an undisputed light heavyweight champion, Jones carried incredible speed, lightning reflexes and power in both hands. A 2003 victory over John Ruiz to capture the WBA heavyweight title took the glitzy American's reputation to even greater heights but incredibly it was the beginning of the end. Jones could never regain his former luster at the lighter weights and lost to more than one fighter he would have toyed with at his peak. The fighter of the '90s is best remembered as perhaps the most athletically gifted prize fighter in boxing history.

SHANE MOSLEY

Record: 48-9-1, 41 KOs • **Accomplishments:** Former three-weight world champion • **Reign at No. 1:** 2000-02

In 1999, a dazzling unbeaten lightweight titleholder named "Sugar" Shane Mosley made the audacious choice to jump all the way to welterweight with an eye on a "Battle of Los Angeles" against Oscar De La Hoya. "The Golden Boy" was looking to regain career momentum following a controversial loss to Felix Trinidad and signed on to face his childhood friend in June 2000. Appropriately staged at the Staples Center, the sensational bout that followed is a lasting tribute to the skills and courage of both men. De La Hoya picked up the majority of the early sessions by applying effective aggression and backing up the smaller man. Suddenly, at the midway point, Mosley picked up the pace and the defending WBC champion struggled for answers. The new Sugar Man claimed the later rounds and closed out brilliantly in a memorable final frame. Mosley had lived up to his illustrious nickname and validated his pound-for-pound credentials in stunning fashion.

BERNARD HOPKINS

Record: 55-7-2, 32 KOs) • **Accomplishments:** Former undisputed middleweight champion and THE RING light heavyweight champion • **Reign at No. 1:** 2002-03, 2004-05

"The Executioner" had been included on pound-for-pound lists for years as a result of a dominant run of 160-pound title defenses but a brilliant 12th-round stoppage of the previously unbeaten Felix Trinidad in September 2001 placed him among the very best. Hopkins was installed as pound-for-pound No. 1 when Vernon Forrest upset Shane Mosley in 2002 but old rival Roy Jones Jr. reclaimed the throne when he toppled John Ruiz at heavyweight. With Jones' loss to Antonio Tarver and Hopkins becoming the first man to stop Oscar De La Hoya, it was hard to deny the undisputed middleweight king's genius as a prizefighter. At 39 years old, his official reign as pound-for-pound No. 1 was cut short as a result of a split-decision loss to Jermain Taylor in 2005 but the great Hopkins remained in the Top 10 for years to come.

MANNY PACQUIAO

Record: 57-6-2, 38 KOs • **Accomplishments:** Former eight-weight titleholder (includes RING belts at featherweight and junior welterweight) • **Reign at No. 1:** 2007-12

The Filipino hero had been a respected fighter who had captured world titles in two weight classes but a sensational 11th-round stoppage of the great Marco Antonio Barrera, to claim the RING featherweight championship, made him a superstar. When Floyd Mayweather Jr. took a brief hiatus from the sport in 2008, Pacquiao notched up legacy-defining wins over Oscar De La Hoya and Ricky Hatton to lay claim to the mythical pound-for-pound title. Juan Manuel Marquez, Erik Morales, Miguel Cotto, Shane Mosley and Antonio Margarito all succumbed to the thunder and lightning of Pacquiao, who amassed a global fan base that was the envy of every elite fighter in the sport. He rebounded from a brutal sixth-round knockout defeat to Marquez in December 2012 to win a WBO welterweight title from Tim Bradley the following year but was soundly outpointed by Mayweather in his most recent outing. Pacquiao is aiming for one more appearance before calling time on a remarkable career.

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.

Record: 49-0, 26 KOs • **Accomplishments:** Former five-weight world champion • **Reign at No. 1:** 2005-07, 2012-15

Once pay-per-view receipts were tabulated, Mayweather's victory over Manny Pacquiao netted him $220 million dollars before taxes and expenses and it might be decades before another fighter gets near those numbers. Money aside, which is sacrilege to the self-proclaimed "TBE," let's have a look at what he accomplished with his fists. The unbeaten Mayweather won myriad title belts in five weight divisions, besting Genaro Hernandez, Jose Luis Castillo, Arturo Gatti, Zab Judah, Ricky Hatton, Juan Manuel Marquez, Shane Mosley, Victor Ortiz, Robert Guerrero, Marcos Maidana and Manny Pacquiao along the way. Not enough? Although he was a natural welterweight, Mayweather also won junior middleweight titles against Oscar De La Hoya, Miguel Cotto and Canelo Alvarez. He did that while barely a whisker over the 150-pound mark. Love him, hate him or pray for him to get on the wrong side of a full-fledged middleweight from Kazakhstan, Mayweather, at his best, proved himself the finest boxer of his generation.

BOB FOSTER
WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST – AND MOST POWERFUL – 175-POUNDERS EVER

By **Don Stradley**

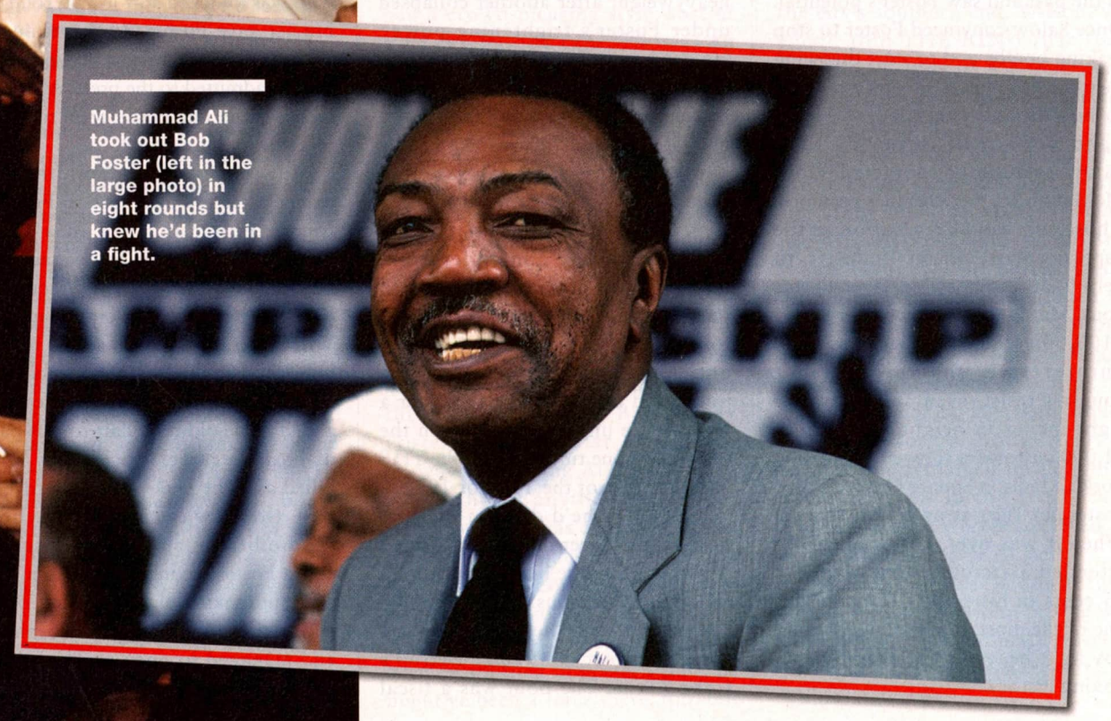
'HE COULD PUNCH LIKE HELL'

Bob Foster was a sportswriter's delight. It wasn't just his stone-cold left hook they loved. Or his willingness to challenge men who outweighed him by as much as 40 pounds. Or the fact that he was deputized by the Bernalillo County sheriff's department in Albuquerque, New Mexico. No, their affection was based on his peculiar physique, a tangle of bones that inspired some of the loopiest prose to ever grace a daily sports section. Foster, who passed away in November at age 76, was once described by Tex Maule of Sports Illustrated as "tall, thin and deadly as a praying mantis." Another SI writer labeled Foster as "a fellow who is built rather more like a pipe cleaner than a prizefighter." Bert Randolph Sugar, who included Foster in his book "The 100 Greatest Boxers of All Time," branded Foster "a hyper pituitary willow stalk."

With what seemed like iron in his gloves, Foster ruled the light heavyweight division from 1968 to 1974, defending the title 14 times. The only blip came when the WBA, in a moment of alphabet madness, stripped him and put their belt on Vicente Rondon. Foster, still in possession of the WBC belt, met Rondon in Miami Beach for a unification bout. Rondon had been a smartass, saying he couldn't wait to taste Foster's power, but in the second round he was hit with a hook that left him on the canvas for several minutes. It was in this fashion that Foster usually solved any questions about his supremacy at 175.

Foster's punching ability stemmed from a combination of his towering height (6 feet 3 inches) and reach of 79 inches, plus his tremendous boxing savvy. Historians point to Sugar Ray Robinson's "perfect punch" against Gene Fullmer. Well, Foster had five or six of those in his career. In fact, he won the light heavyweight championship with a thundering left to Dick Tiger's head that sent the famous Nigerian to the canvas as if he'd been dropped there from the rafters. How Foster got to that memorable day in May 1968 was the real story of his career.

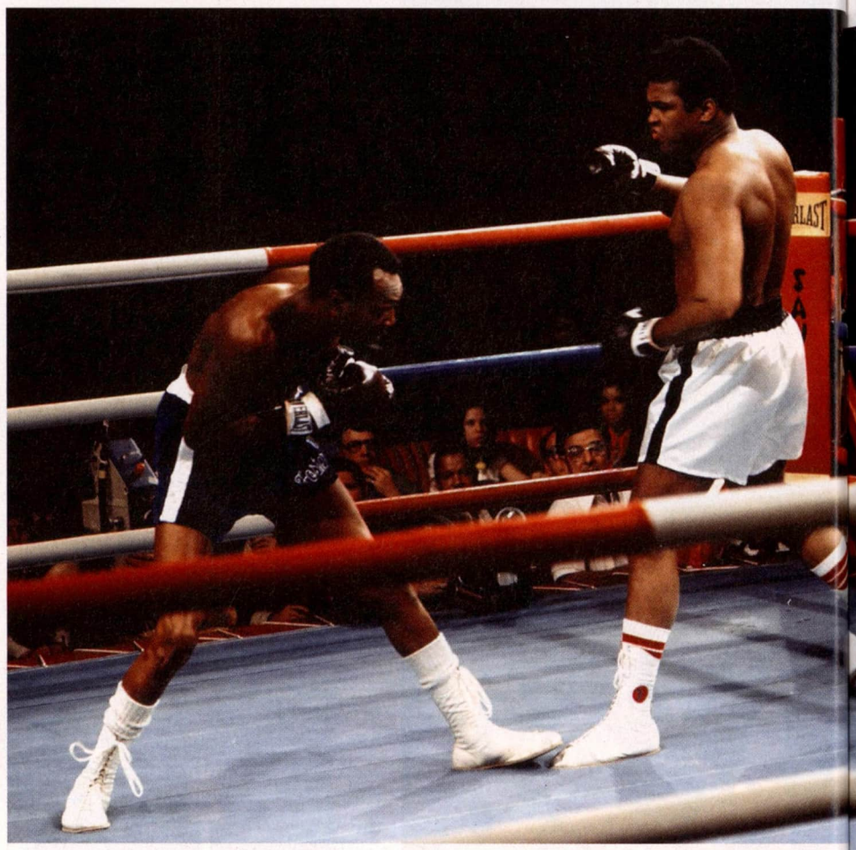
Texas-born Bobby Wayne Foster (noted in some records as "Robert Lloyd Foster," though in one of his final interviews he gave his real name as "Bobby Wayne") had been a good



Muhammad Ali took out Bob Foster (left in the large photo) in eight rounds but knew he'd been in a fight.

all-around athlete in his adopted hometown of Albuquerque. In fact, Foster reportedly turned down a football scholarship to enlist in the Air Force. After approximately 100 amateur bouts and a silver medal at the 1959 Pan Am Games, Foster turned pro. He didn't have the luxury of smart management to pamper him with easy opponents. Instead, he fought anywhere for money, even against bigger, more experienced heavyweights. In those early years there were losses to Doug Jones and Ernie Terrell, plus a trip to Peru that resulted in a questionable points loss to Mauro Mina. Dually cursed with a big punch but no name, Foster was frustrated by his lack of progress. After a points loss to heavyweight Zora Folley, Foster retired from boxing and took a job at American Machine & Foundry, a veritable bomb factory. He and his wife of the time barely earned enough to raise their four children.

Foster remained inactive until Connecticut restaurant owner and vending-machine magnate Morris Salow stepped forward to manage him. Salow, known to his friends as "Mushky," had guided some fighters in the past and saw Foster's potential. Once Salow convinced Foster to stop making bombs and to start throwing them at opponents, Foster returned to boxing and compiled an eight-fight win streak (seven by KO). Salow eventually contacted Vince McMahon Sr., the wrestling promoter whose son would revolutionize the "sports entertainment" industry, to help finance a possible Tiger-Foster bout. McMahon and a partner raised $100,000 to entice the previously uninterested champion. Tiger couldn't resist, even as he gave up eight inches in height. More than 11,000 customers showed up at New York's Madison Square Garden to see Foster put Tiger away in four rounds. When it was over, Foster allegedly attended a victory party with just 35 cents in his pocket. Thus began one of the most dominating reigns of any light heavyweight champion in boxing history.



How they fell! One light heavyweight after another collapsed under Foster's frightening power. He used to train with a one-pound weight in his left hand to increase his punching strength. "When I threw my jab," he said, "it was like hitting you with a brick." Highly touted Mike Quarry went down in four as if struck by lightning. Brian Kelly, a rugged young contender from Oklahoma whose promoter wanted to bring back 20-round fights just to show Kelly's durability, lasted until the third. Chris Finnegan, a tough and crafty Brit, gave Foster a grim battle until being KO'd in the 14th. That one turned out to be THE RING's Fight of the Year for 1972.

But just as he'd done in the first part of his career, Foster still found himself testing the heavyweight class for financial reasons. He was aiming for Joe Frazier's heavyweight title when they met in 1970 at Detroit's Cobo Arena. The bout was a fiscal flop as well as a disaster for Foster, who was knocked stiff in two rounds. Frazier gave Foster his due, though. "Man, he was rattling my brains," Frazier admitted to the press. After the bout, Frazier and Foster went to a bar together and got drunk.

Muhammad Ali, rebuilding his career after his own loss to Frazier, fought Foster in 1972 in a Lake Tahoe Hotel. By then, Salow had sold Foster's contract to Lou Viscusi, a colorful chap who had once managed Willie Pep. Foster was a fine trash-talker and could melt opponents with a baleful stare but Viscusi's presence added some old-time flair to this part of Foster's career. Foster was now billed as "The Duke City Destroyer" and there was much ballyhoo (undoubtedly spread by Viscusi) about Foster having beaten Ali in the amateur ranks, which was a lie. Foster endured the circus-like atmosphere and managed to open a cut on Ali's left eyebrow, a rarity in Ali's career.

'I regard him as one of the best light heavyweights I've ever seen. ... He carried himself with reserve and dignity. And he could punch like hell.'

– Larry Merchant

Foster (left) didn't fare well against heavyweights, including KO losses to Ali and Joe Frazier.

The much bigger and quicker Ali responded by dropping Foster seven times on the way to an eighth-round KO. Foster took the loss in stride. He'd made a career-high $150,000, which he wouldn't have earned fighting the light heavyweights of the day.

After a pair of 15-round decision wins over Pierre Fourie (the second of which was the first integrated bout in Apartheid-ruled South Africa) and a draw with Jorge Ahumada, Foster retired as champion in 1974. He came back for several more bouts, finally calling it quits at age 40 in 1978 with a record of 56-8-1 (46 KOs). Along with his 14 successful title defenses, Foster was undefeated in eight non-title bouts, which means he faced down 22 men during his championship reign. When you consider that most of his losses came to heavyweights or at the end of his career, his final ledger becomes more impressive. Deservedly, Foster was inducted along with such legends as Joe Louis and Ali in the IBHOF's debut year of 1990. If Foster wasn't the greatest light heavyweight of all time, he was certainly among the top three or four.

"I regard him as one of the best light heavyweights I've ever seen," said former HBO boxing analyst Larry Merchant. "He wasn't an urban guy or a Southerner or a West Coast guy; he wasn't from the usual place where fighters come from. That made him a bit different. He carried himself with reserve and dignity. And he could punch like hell. He was one of those tall guys with great leverage, a forerunner of Tommy Hearns. As a fighter, there was a quiet menace about him; he knew how to cut off the ring and he was looking to demolish opponents."

Especially memorable for Merchant was Foster's 1969 bout with tough Frank DePaula: "Frankie had a rep as a hard street guy, with alleged connections to the mob. He had a crowd-pleasing style, sort of a Rocky Balboa type. He was an attraction."

DePaula and Tiger had met in a box-off for the right to a title shot, an exciting bout won by DePaula. Not surprisingly, Foster knocked DePaula out in one round.

"Foster came along when boxing was changing from a major sport to more of a cult thing," Merchant said. "He didn't have the personality of an Archie Moore so the writers didn't rally around him the way they did for Archie. But I'd say Foster was a popular TV fighter, by way of fighting Ali and Frazier. I never heard anything bad about Bob Foster. He was a straight arrow who threw his right hand as straight as an arrow. People who saw him didn't forget him."

Had the cruiserweight division been established in Foster's time, he might've been a force there, too. But Foster found another way to pay the bills, namely through the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department, where he served for several years as a deputy sheriff. Foster kept a hand in boxing, though, training and managing fighters in the Albuquerque area, including one of his sons, Tony Foster, who boxed briefly as a heavyweight.

In recent years Foster was slowed by health problems and was fitted with a breathing apparatus. He died at Presbyterian hospital in Albuquerque with family members at his side. At a tear-filled memorial service shortly after his death, Foster was remembered by friends as a big-hearted guy with a raunchy sense of humor. Ben Wilson, Foster's manager and attorney, told the Albuquerque Journal that Foster was as tough and self-reliant as one would expect.

"He was just a one-of-a-kind, no-holds-barred type of personality," Wilson said. "Maybe quite a bit of it isn't really suitable for print. He wasn't the most politically correct guy out there."

Foster often complained that Albuquerque had forgotten him despite a road named after him in the city's southern end. Wilson, via email, told THE RING that time had erased some of Albuquerque's memories but the city still respected its old champion.

"In a way, it was a natural progression as he fell out of the limelight and into his full-time job as a deputy sheriff," Wilson wrote. "Probably the biggest factor over time was the emergence of (Albuquerque fighters) Johnny Tapia and Danny Romero during the 1990s. Bob ended up sharing the attention of boxing fans with Johnny and Danny for the past 20 years or so. But Bob remained in the public eye quite a bit in the last decade and was always warmly received by boxing fans wherever he went."

Whether or not Albuquerque forgets him, the world of boxing will always have a special place reserved for Bob Foster, the hard-hitting willow stalk.

THE RING MAGAZINE

SPIRIT OF '76

HOWARD DAVIS' GREATEST MOMENT CAME IN A GOLDEN MONTREAL OLYMPICS

By **Thomas Hauser**

Everybody liked Howard Davis. He had a warm way about him. And he was a very good boxer.

Davis, who died at 59 after a long bout with lung cancer on Dec. 30, won four national Golden Gloves titles and an amateur world crown. He then vaulted into the public consciousness at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal.

Five American boxers won Olympic gold medals that year. Davis, who reigned supreme at 132 pounds, was awarded the Val Barker Trophy as the outstanding fighter of the 1976 Games.

Putting that achievement in perspective, the other American gold-medal winners were Ray Leonard, Leon and Michael Spinks, and Leo Randolph.

"Winning the gold medal was a moment of mixed emotions," Davis later recalled. "It meant I'd won the greatest prize in amateur sports. But three days before the Olympics, my mother had died. So even now, the Olympics are a memory tinged with sadness. I was never able to complete the feel-good process about them."

Two of Davis' teammates, Leonard and Michael Spinks, rose to superstardom. Leon Spinks embarked on a roller-coaster ride that included a 1978 upset of Muhammad Ali for the heavyweight championship of the world. Leo Randolph fought professionally for only two years but captured the WBA junior featherweight title. Of the five gold-medal winners, only Davis failed to win a world crown.

He came close twice.

In 1980, in Glasgow, Davis challenged Scotland's Jim Watt for the WBC lightweight title. Watt won a hard-fought unanimous decision by scores of 145-144, 147-144, and 149-142 over 15 rounds.

Responding to the first loss of his professional career, Davis ran off 13 consecutive victories. In 1984, he challenged again for the WBC title. This time, the opponent was Edwin Rosario, with the bout in Rosario's backyard, San Juan.

Rosario started fast, dominating the first three minutes and flooring Davis in the second stanza. But in the third round, an overhand right caught Rosario flush on the cheekbone and turned the tide. After 11 rounds, one judge had Rosario ahead by two points and a second favored Davis by three. The third judge, Sid Nathan of Great Britain, had the bout dead even. The 12th round would decide it.

For 2 minutes, 50 seconds of the last round, Davis dominated. Then, with 10 seconds left, a big left sent him to the canvas again. That was the difference. Rosario retained his title on a 115-114, 117-113, 113-114 split decision.

Four years later, Davis had one more title opportunity, this one an IBF bout at 140 pounds. But he was past his prime and was stopped by Buddy McGirt in the first round.

Let it be noted that each of Davis' three championship-bout losses was to an elite fighter on the champion's home turf.

I was friendly with Davis. He was in my home several times. One of those occasions stands out in my mind.

I collect books. Over the years, I've amassed a library of more than 4,000 volumes. Howard was looking at them one day and his eye was drawn to a seven-book set entitled "The World and its People" published in 1925. He took Volume One – "The Ancient World and Ancient Lands" – off the shelf and turned to a chapter entitled "Mesopotamia: The Land of the Beginning."

"When I think about history like this," Howard told me, "it makes me feel spiritual."

Howard Davis was a welcome spirit and a breath of fresh air in the sometimes putrid atmosphere of boxing. RING

BEST OF THE BEST

Howard Davis won the Val Barker Trophy signifying the best boxer in the 1976 Olympics. That must've been a tough decision. At least three of the five American gold medalists had equally impressive runs in Montreal. Below are the results of each champion's fights (including scoring in decisions or stoppages).

LEO RANDOLPH, flyweight: walkover, 4-1, 4-1, 4-1 and 3-2

HOWARD DAVIS, lightweight: 5-0, RSC 2, RSC 3, 5-0, 5-0

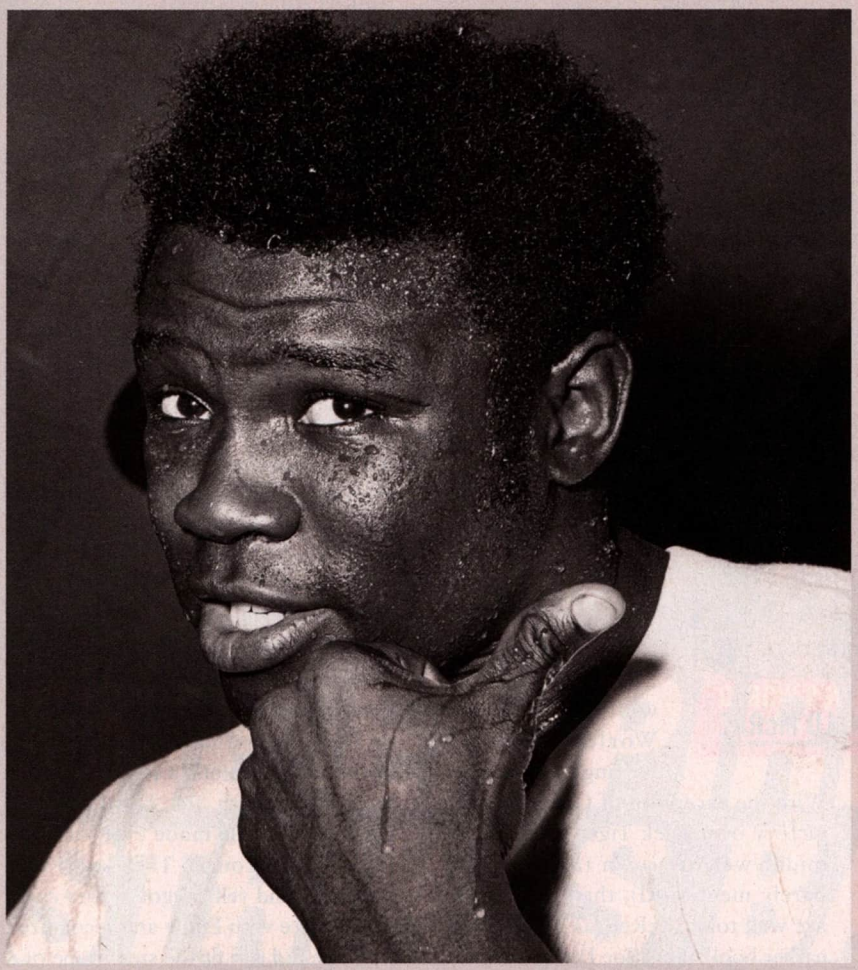
RAY LEONARD, junior welterweight: 5-0, 5-0, 5-0, 5-0, 5-0, 5-0

MICHAEL SPINKS, middleweight: walkover, 5-0, walkover, RSC 3

LEON SPINKS, light heavyweight: KO 1, 5-0, 5-0, 5-0, RSC 3

Note: RSC is referee stops contest. Also, the participants had between three and six fights depending on their division.

TONY DUFF/GETTY IMAGES



Emile Griffith was gay during a much less tolerant time.

A COMPLEX MAN

'A MAN'S WORLD: THE DOUBLE LIFE OF **EMILE GRIFFITH**' DEFTLY TELLS A COMPELLING STORY

Emile Griffith had his first professional fight on June 2, 1958. Less than three years later, at age 23, he was welterweight champion of the world.

Over the course of his 19-year ring career, Griffith had 111 fights and boxed the staggering total of 1,122 rounds, 337 of them in championship competition. That's 51 more championship rounds than Sugar Ray Robinson. His final record was 85-24-2 (23 knockouts). Many of those losses came long after he should have stopped fighting.

Griffith beat Luis Rodriguez three times, Benny Paret twice, Nino Benvenuti, Benny Briscoe, and Dick Tiger. He's on the short list of the greatest welterweights of all time.

He was gay.

"A Man's World: The Double Life of Emile Griffith" by Donald McRae (Simon & Schuster) is the biography that this complex man deserves.

Griffith was welterweight champion in an era when, in McRae's words, "boxing still carried profound meaning." There were only eight champions on Earth at any given time. He won the title by decision over Benny Paret in their first encounter. Before their second bout, which Paret won by decision, the challenger alluded disparagingly to the champion's sexuality. That set the stage for March 24, 1962.

At the weigh-in for their third fight, Paret openly derided Griffith as a "*maricon*."

"*Maricon*," McRae writes, "was the worst and deadliest insult in Hispanic culture."

That night, Griffith beat Paret to death in the ring. For the first time ever, a man was killed on live national television. The horror of it led to calls in state legislatures to abolish boxing. A *New York Times* editorial declared, "The question everybody is asking is whether this fight was allowed to go on too long. A better question might be whether it or any other professional prizefight should be allowed to start."

Griffith was haunted by Paret's death. Although he fought for 15 more years, he was never the same fighter again. And he suffered outside the ring too. The guilt that he felt over killing a man was compounded by the societal taboo against homosexuality.

McRae recounts the tenor of those times:

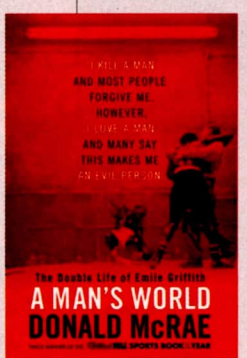
"The onslaught against homosexuality ran deep and wide. The state and the church and the courts, the police and the doctors, the newspapers and the magazines, the rich and the powerful, the poor and the illiterate, were united in their condemnation of men like Emile Griffith. A homosexual, to them, was sick and cowardly. He was depraved and absurd."

There's more:

"Most of America believed that homosexuality was a disease-spreading curse that needed to be cut out like a cancer. Gay sex in 1964 was still illegal in forty-nine out of America's fifty states. On 17 December 1963, the New York Times printed a 5,000-word feature beginning on the front page, which explored 'the homosexual problem.' In a story headlined

'Growth of Homosexuality in City Provokes Wide Concern,' the Times complained, 'Sexual inverts have colonized three areas of New York. The city's homosexual community acts as a kind of lodestar, attracting others from all over the country. The old idea, assiduously propagated by the homosexuals, that homosexuality is an inborn incurable disease has been exploded by modern psychiatry. In the opinion of many experts, it can be both prevented and cured."

"Amid such oppression," McRae concludes, "the idea of Emile coming out in public as a gay man would not just have invited disbelief. It would have been a criminal act which could have resulted in his imprisonment. It felt forbidden to give voice to his true self."



Thirty-six hours after Griffith-Paret III, Griffith's manager (Howie Albert), trainer (Gil Clancy), and other members of his team met with the press and sought to dispel rumors about Emile's sexuality. One by one, they had their say: "It just takes one malicious guy to spread false rumors. ... This stuff about Emile is so far from the truth. ... This boy is a normal boy. There's nothing wrong with him."

Did they know?

Of course they did. But as McRae writes, "Emile remained nailed to his cross of silent denial. The idea of calling himself a 'homosexual' seemed impossible once he became such a public figure. The mystery of Emile Griffith was buried tight inside him. He still could not bear to voice the truth out loud, which meant he lived an essentially melancholic life studded by moments of outrageous happiness. It was impossible to live a balanced and serene life."

But Griffith's life as a gay man wasn't as closeted as most people think it was. Yes, there was a concerted effort to keep references to it out of the media. But Emile frequented gay bars on a regular basis and had several long-term live-in lovers.

"He felt no shame or guilt in holding a man, in kissing him and doing much more," McRae wrote. "He did not tell himself that he needed to change and stick to a straight and narrow life. And so, even as a new world champion, he was back in Times Square, laughing and dancing with the hustlers and strippers, the young Hispanic gay crowd and the old drag queens. Emile still insisted on walking through the front door of his favorite bars."

The paradox of Griffith's life was crystallized in words that Emile spoke to his friend Ron Ross: "I kill a man, and most people forgive me. However, I love a man, and many say this makes me an evil person."

The words flow well in "A Man's World." McRae's writing always does. With the exception of Griffith's 1966 victory over Dick Tiger to claim the middleweight crown (a fight that's barely mentioned), the major fights are well told. McRae, as he did in an earlier book about Joe Louis, recreates Griffith's private life and demons well.

There are some nagging factual errors in the book. For example, McRae says that Joe Frazier knocked Muhammad Ali down in Round 11 of their first fight. It was in round 15. Also, McRae attributes the phrase "No Viet Cong ever called me n---er" to Ali. I've never seen a contemporaneous source for that, although it has been incorrectly cited so many times that it has become part of many Ali chronicles. The words were first spoken by Stokely Carmichael. Ali might have spoken them later. He certainly didn't say them on the day he was reclassified 1-A by his draft board and proclaimed, "I ain't got no quarrel with them Viet Cong."

That said, McRae is a very good writer. And "A Man's World" is a very good book. The amount of information that it offers regarding Griffith's personal life (including the intimate details of several long-term relationships with gay partners) is particularly impressive and tastefully reported.

The end game for Griffith was sad. Brain damage sustained during his long career as a fighter was exacerbated by a horrible beating outside a gay bar called Hombre in New York City in July 1992. His last years were spent in a hellish dementia so severe that he could not speak. By then, McRae recounts, "Emile resembled a man in a waking coma" living in "a shadowy world of silence and sleep."

Griffith died at 75 on July 23, 2013.

How important was Emile Griffith? Two voices answer that question.

"Emile," McRae writes, "gave gay men, especially gay black men, belief that the world might start to regard homosexuality in a different light. Every time news spread that the world champion had arrived at Bon Soir or Dr. Feelgood or Telstar or any of the other gay joints, a jolt of courage surged through the clubbers like electricity. Emile made everyone feel just a little stronger. They knew that no one would yell 'faggot' if they came face to face with Emile and recognized him. He did not fit the stereotype of a homosexual man. Emile Griffith broke the mold and, for his courage, he was celebrated. He was cherished. He was loved. He gave them all hope amid the suffering oppression."

Freddie Wright, one of Emile's closest friends for decades, is in accord and told McRae, "Emile lived in two worlds. He was a great fighter, and they loved and respected him in boxing. In his other world, in my world, he made gay people feel so proud, especially because he was a world champion. Emile might not have shouted out his sexuality, but he stayed true to all of us. He lit a fire in so many people. We not only respected and liked Emile. We loved him."

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "A Hurting Sport: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing" – was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

Tyson Fury went to the head of the current U.K. class when he beat Wladimir Klitschko.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

NEW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP **TYSON FURY** TOPPED A BANNER YEAR FOR BRITISH FIGHTERS

By **Gareth A Davies**

A huge change had swept over British and European boxing from mid-November up to the end of December. The U.K. ended the year with 11 world titleholders, the crowning moment being Tyson Fury's dethroning of Wladimir Klitschko after the Ukrainian's near-decade-long reign as the heavyweight king.

Fury can stake his claim to being the only one of those British champions who legitimately beat the No. 1-ranked boxer in the world in his division.

"The King is Dead, Long Live the King," comes the historic roar when an aristocrat or sporting great has been deposed, and with Fury as the new No. 1, the division is suddenly extended a new lifeline of dawning options.

And given Fury's gregarious character, at times close to the edge, at times pure entertainment, interest in the division has now piqued again. Some want to see Fury beaten, many want to see him go on. It was ever thus.

The achievement and manner of Fury's victory was even more impressive when the brain trust, namely Peter Fury, revealed to me that his nephew had weighed in at 322 pounds (23 stone; 146 kg) for training camp in July. Yet Fury was 247 pounds (17.6 stone; 112 kg) when he slipped the belt from around the bewildered Klitschko on Nov. 28 in Dusseldorf.

Uncle Peter had read his nephew the riot act at the start of training camp. He wanted athlete, not "junk eater." There was a transformation come fight time. "He was 5 stone overweight and I told him, 'This can't go on. You're wasting your talent,'" the 46-year-old trainer explained to me. Peter and Tyson's father, John, deserve huge credit for keeping Tyson on a tight road, creating his training regimen and the game plan they implemented, which was simplicity itself: being the first man to stay out of range, making Klitschko struggle to reach him, in order to take away his jab. The masterminding of such a plan cannot be overstated.

ELITE 11

The 11 world titleholders from the U.K.:

TYSON FURY, HEAVYWEIGHT: RING, WBA AND WBO

JAMES DEGALE, SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT: IBF

BILLY JOE SAUNDERS, MIDDLEWEIGHT: WBO

LIAM SMITH, JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT: WBO

KELL BROOK, WELTERWEIGHT: IBF

ANTHONY CROLLA, LIGHTWEIGHT: WBA

TERRY FLANAGAN, LIGHTWEIGHT: WBO

LEE SELBY, FEATHERWEIGHT: IBF

CARL FRAMPTON, JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT: IBF

SCOTT QUIGG, JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT: WBA

LEE HASKINS, BANTAMWEIGHT: IBF

NOTE: Jamie McDonnell holds a secondary WBA title, which THE RING doesn't recognize.

Super middleweight James DeGale became a world titleholder in 2015.

There were several renowned commentators and writers I respect greatly who saw fit to deride the action-less contest yet I'd like to put on record that after a fascinating fight week build-up of twists and turns – including "Glove-gate," over the Paffen gloves arriving on time, and "Foam-gate," with three layers of padding under the canvas – from the ringside apron, it was a compelling, intense contest.

Fury's achievement in dethroning Klitschko remains the greatest single feat by a British boxer this year and arguably the best outright victory, pound for pound, since Joe Calzaghe defeated Bernard Hopkins in 2008.

The balance of power in the heavyweight division now sits in this country, with the rise of Anthony Joshua and the return of former two-weight world champion David Haye after 3½ years in the wilderness. Deontay Wilder, of course, holds the WBC portion of the heavyweight crown but his gaze is across The Pond at Fury and the returning Haye, who is an established sparring partner of the American's. By some accounts, they have had furious sessions *mano a mano*.

As the final days of 2015 ticked away, I caught up with Robert Smith, General Secretary of the British Boxing Board. "It's one of the best years ever," he told me, having boxed himself against Lloyd Honeyghan in the 1980s and an official with the Boxing Board for more than 20 years. Smith's father was also the manager of Joe Bugner and others.

"We have seen the successes rising over the last two or three years. To have 12 world champions (11 recognized by THE RING) is remarkable and we have some great talent. I don't think we've ever had as many world champions. It's inevitable we'll lose some along the way in 2016 but we've got people coming through behind them who could regain them.

"I think Tyson Fury's success has been watered down a little bit by recent events but I don't think many foresaw the coming of a new heavyweight champion. But it's a great time for heavyweights and maybe particularly in the U.K. Haye just needs one fight and he's back in the mix and perhaps the rest will have done him the world of good. Dillian Whyte and Anthony Joshua put on an exciting fight in December in front of 20,000 in London and both proved a lot about themselves. I think what really stands out is that Tyson Fury is still only 27, still only a very young man in heavyweight terms."

Smith is facing an inquisition worldwide for the unbridled success of British boxing. "I was at the WBA convention in Panama in December and it is the first and most asked question: 'What is the reason for the

success in the U.K.?' And it's hard to put your finger on it," he said. "We are generating large crowds at events. We are great at putting bums on seats (selling lots of tickets, in Queen's English) and putting on entertaining fights and people enjoy success. The Americans are jealous of what we are doing. This has been a gradual building process, as you only have to look at what recent amateur teams have done at Commonwealth Games, World Championships and Olympics. You have to have your building blocks and we get 99 percent of our professionals from the amateur ranks and we are working more closely with the amateur set-up than we ever have before."

Smith points to a few times in the last decade when interest peaked. "I think we had similar times with the eras of Carl Froch, Joe Calzaghe and Ricky Hatton," he said. "They were successful, there was a following generated in those areas, and then nationally. It's the thing whereby success breeds success."

Smith and I then enthused about fantastic domestic clashes coming up in 2016, which always sell: Kell Brook-Amir Khan, Carl Frampton-Scott Quigg and potentially Joshua-Haye if promoter Eddie Hearn sees the benefits of the risks that brings for the young heavyweight. My belief is that Joshua-Haye may not happen until very late 2016 or even early 2017.

Great credit should go to IBF super middleweight champion James DeGale, who won twice on the road, along with Jamie McDonnell, who beat Tomoki Kameda in back-to-back fights in America. They, like all of the breakthrough U.K. fighters, are still to take out the No. 1-ranked fighters in their divisions. DeGale, who made history by becoming the first Olympic gold medalist to claim a world crown, must defeat Arthur Abraham in 2016.

Billy Joe Saunders, the WBO middleweight champion, who boxed exceptionally against Andy Lee, needs a victory over Daniel Jacobs, Saul Alvarez or even Gennady Golovkin to reach another level. He has also set his sights on Miguel Cotto but is likely to be brought along carefully by promoter Frank Warren. Saunders is supremely skilled yet still learning. Late rounds in fights is where his work-rate needs to be studied.

But against any measure it was a wonderful year with Liam Smith becoming WBO junior middleweight champion, Terry Flanagan showing that he is the worthy WBO lightweight champion and Lee Selby proving he could go on to be great as the new IBF featherweight titleholder. Scott Quigg was upgraded to full WBA junior featherweight titleholder in October while Carl Frampton retained his IBF junior featherweight belt twice in 2015. Bragging rights for that pair when they meet in what should be a thriller on Feb. 27. Lee Haskins also came from obscurity to claim the IBF bantamweight title, although it was by dint of his opponent, Randy Caballero, failing to make the weight last November in Las Vegas.

TOP 10

1. **AMIR KHAN**
2. **TYSON FURY**
3. **KELL BROOK**
4. **LEE SELBY**
5. **CARL FRAMPTON**
6. **JAMES DEGALE**
7. **SCOTT QUIGG**
8. **JAMIE MCDONNELL**
9. **BILLY JOE SAUNDERS**
10. **CALLUM SMITH**

11-15: Liam Smith, Tony Bellew, Terry Flanagan, Chris Eubank Jr., Anthony Crolla

Through fights of Jan. 3, 2016

Kell Brook, the IBF welterweight champion, had a quiet year in 2015 against mediocre opposition but a blockbuster stadium fight with Amir Khan beckons this summer, a make-or-break year for Khan in my view. This fight with Brook could well define his future. It was a wretched year for Khan's stock as an elite level boxer in 2015. The Floyd Mayweather Jr. fight eluded the fast-handed fighter from Bolton and then late in the year he was rejected as an opponent for Manny Pacquiao, for what is expected to be the Filipino's swansong, in April 2016. Pacquiao decided to fight Tim Bradley.

World issues, not pugilism, had Khan's attention in 2015. All of it laudable work. But none of it advanced his boxing career. There has been a call from his trainer, Virgil Hunter, to spend more time in the gym, training in America, if he is to fulfill his huge talent. Spot on.

Yet there has been no greater story of heroism in the whole of British sport, not just boxing, than Anthony Crolla, who merited a bravery award for his act of civic selflessness. Crolla returned from a fractured skull and ankle, sustained after tackling burglars at a neighbor's home in Manchester, to defeat Darleys Perez with a fifth-round, body-shot knockout to claim the WBA lightweight championship in November. From the dark days he endured through recovery and rehabilitation, believing the life that had defined him could be over, there is now the prospect that Crolla could defend his crown at Old Trafford, home of his beloved Manchester United Football Club, in 2016. From darkness, great happiness. Here's to a great boxing year in 2016. Cheers from Across The Pond.

Gareth A Davies is boxing correspondent for The Telegraph, London.

BEST OF DOUGIE'S MAILBAG

EXCERPTS FROM THE **RINGTV.COM** EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN By **Doug Fischer**

Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialog – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag."

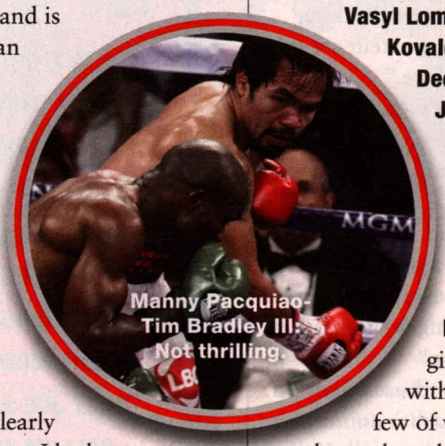
The following excerpts are from the Dec. 28, 2015, and Jan. 1, 2016, editions of the Monday and Friday mailbags.

RYAN, from New York, is "very disappointed" that Manny Pacquiao and Tim Bradley will fight a third time on April 9 in what has been billed as Pacman's final bout. He says Pacquiao "dominated" Bradley twice and believes a much worthier opponent would have been Terence Crawford, a member of the Top Rank promotional stable whose career could have benefited greatly from HBO's pay-per-view spotlight and the opportunity to beat the Filipino legend.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I'm sure Top Rank CEO Bob Arum would agree. But Arum isn't the one calling the shots on this fight; Pacquiao is. Pacquiao's management isn't concerned about Crawford's star potential or legacy. They only want the best deal for Pacquiao.

And in the event the Filipino icon decides that he might want to continue fighting after April 9, it makes sense that he doesn't select an opponent who can not only defeat him but beat his ass. Crawford has the punishing ability to make sure that Pacquiao retires for good. I don't think they want that. They want someone that Pacquiao can beat.

On the flipside, Pacquiao and Arum know that they have to select a credible opponent if they hope to garner a decent amount of PPV buys. Bradley seems to be a nice middle ground. He's a respected and accomplished veteran, who now has a high-profile/media-friendly trainer, and is still considered an elite boxer in some circles. Yet Pacquiao appears to have his number.



Manny Pacquiao-Tim Bradley III: Not thrilling.

Having said that, I wouldn't say that he's "dominated" Bradley twice. I think Pacquiao clearly *beat* Bradley twice – I had it nine rounds to three for Pac in the first bout and eight rounds to four for him in the rematch – but I believe both bouts were competitive. There were definitely close rounds that I scored for Pacquiao that could have gone to Bradley in both bouts. Still, there's no doubt in my mind that the wrong guy won in 2012 and the right guy won in 2014.

I picked Bradley to beat Pacquiao in the rematch because I thought he'd finally gotten his head together. Then he got into the ring and acted like he'd knocked out his last 20 opponents. I'll never know why he thought he was going to KO Pacquiao. But I think he'll have more control of his emotions in the rubber match. I think he'll know when to box smart and the appropriate time to step on the gas (and I believe Teddy Atlas will help him make the right decisions). I'm thinking of going with Bradley in this third bout.

So, obviously, I'm somewhat interested in Bradley-Pacquiao III. I didn't want or ask for the fight, like most fans and media, but I don't have a huge problem with it being made. If April 9 really is Pacquiao's last fight (yeah, right), Bradley is a much better swan song opponent than, say, ahem, Andre Berto.

AARON, from the U.K., kept an end-of-the year tradition going by listing five made or potential matches that he anticipates or hopes to see in 2016 – Carl Frampton-Scott Quigg, Gennady Golovkin-Canelo Alvarez, Lee Selby-Vasyl Lomachenko, Sergey Kovalev-Andre Ward and Deontay Wilder-Anthony Joshua – and then asking Fischer to name his five 2016 "dream" bouts (and include the outcomes).

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I'll give it try (and I'll go with different fights, a few of which will definitely be made and some that could be made if the fighters and their management really want to):

Jorge Linares vs. Yuriorkis Gamboa – I like Linares by late-rounds TKO in a fast-paced and wildly entertaining lightweight scrap that features at least four knockdowns (with both talented but flawed combatants touching canvas). Both boxers are good ring generals but I think Linares' better technique will trump Gamby's superior athleticism.

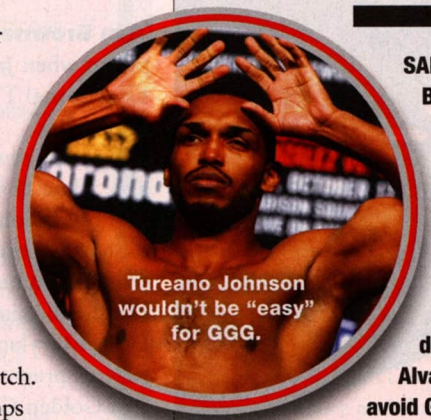
Takashi Uchiyama vs. Nicholas Walters – I favor "the Axe Man" in this wonderful battle of hard-and-accurate punching junior lightweights. I think Walters' body attack will be the key to a decision victory or late stoppage.

Keith Thurman vs. Shawn Porter – I view this battle for PBC welterweight supremacy as a toss-up fight with lots of checks and balances but I'm going to go with Thurman by close decision. I think his lateral movement and

ability to punch on the fly (especially to the body) will enable him to contain Porter's awkward roughhouse aggression just enough to outpoint the classy Ohioan.

Roman Gonzalez vs. Juan Estrada – I think the rematch will be just as thrilling as their first bout (which I was lucky to witness from ringside) and I think it will end the same way, with Chocolatito winning a competitive but clear decision.

Tyson Fury vs. Wilder – The Twitter battles and press events will pave the way to what should be a fun and very high-profile heavyweight encounter. I think Fury will take Wilder into deep water and get the better of the athletic American down the stretch. Fury will take some lumps but will still have fun en route to a decision victory.


Tureano Johnson wouldn't be "easy" for GGG.

ADAM, from Hayward, California, says he can't think of any PPV fights that involve American fighters, particularly "A-side" American fighters, that could take place in 2016. He views this as a problem, one that is caused in part by a lack of American athletic talent getting involved in boxing.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I think we've got a lot of boxing talent in the U.S. We just need these guys to fight each other in order to draw attention to them and advance the winners (and in some cases the losers too) to the next level. At welterweight, Keith Thurman needs to fight Shawn Porter and the winner needs to fight Danny Garcia. The winner of that fight needs to fight Errol Spence Jr. and so on. Same deal at junior middleweight with the Charlo twins (Jermall and Jermell), Julian Williams and Demetrius Andrade. And a year from now, a pack of young West Coast-based featherweights – Joseph Diaz Jr., Manuel Avila, Jessie Magdaleno, Julian Ramirez, Abraham Lopez, Guy Robb and Vic Pasillas – will need to stage a little round robin to see who's the best of the U.S. at 126 pounds.

Regarding American PPV players in 2016, Bradley gets his third shot at Pacquiao soon. He's not the "A-side," but if he wins he could be in that position for his next PPV bout. The same can be said about Andre Ward if your hometown hero can beat Kovalev.

SAM, from Blackburn, England, is thinking about the prelude to the proposed Alvarez-Golovkin showdown. He doesn't think Alvarez will try to avoid GGG and is more curious about who the young Mexican star and Golovkin will face in their interim bouts in the first part of 2016. Sam thinks Golovkin will take on his IBF mandatory challenger, Tureano Johnson, in what he views as an easy title defense. He's not sure who Alvarez will face but views David Lemieux, Billy Joe Saunders and Chris Eubank Jr. as dangerous foes. He says Gabriel Rosado and WBC No. 1 contender Jorge Sebastian Heiland make more sense for Canelo's first middleweight title defense.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I also believe that Canelo and Golovkin will fight in September 2016 and I think Johnson is a solid choice of "interim" opponent for GGG. I don't think Johnson will be an "easy" defense for the WBA/IBF titleholder.

My guess is that Canelo will either take on Rosado or Heiland in May. It's too soon to talk about a showdown with Saunders (who just won his WBO belt), Lemieux (who needs a comeback bout or two) and Eubank Jr. (who still needs to establish his name outside of the U.K.). I agree that all three middleweight standouts would be dangerous fights for Canelo.

JARRETT HURD

Jarrett Hurd won't be rushed in his pro career.

154-POUND PROSPECT BELIEVES HIS BIG VICTORY ON SHOWTIME IS ONLY THE BEGINNING

By **Keith Idec**

Tom Browner would've been proud when Jarrett Hurd made his national TV debut this past November.

Browner saw potential 10 years ago, when he began training Hurd as a precocious 15-year-old. Hurd didn't take training seriously back then. He came to the Hillcrest Heights Boxing Gym in Temple Hills, Maryland, only when it was time to prepare for Junior Olympic and Golden Gloves tournaments.

It wasn't until Browner died at 70 in August 2010 after a long battle with bone cancer that a motivated Hurd firmly committed to becoming the type of fighter his trainer envisioned. Ernesto Rodriguez, whom Browner trained as a pro, became Hurd's new cornerman. With Al Haymon's help, they took a measured approach to the junior middleweight prospect's development once he turned pro in September 2012, fighting mostly pedestrian opponents with losing records on club cards in Washington, D.C., and Maryland.

When it came time to step up, however, Hurd delivered a career-altering performance against the previously unbeaten Frank Galarza in a Showtime main event on Nov. 14 at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas.

Galarza had won twice on "ShoBox" before facing Hurd, including a second-round knockout of then-undefeated John Thompson. Hurd entered their fight unproven and unknown to boxing fans outside the D.C. area yet confident it was Galarza, not him, who was in over his head.

Hurd floored Galarza with an

THE ESSENTIALS
JARRETT HURD

Age: 25

Weight class: Junior middleweight

Height: 5 feet 9 inches

Stance: Orthodox

Hometown: Accokeek, Maryland

Record: 17-0 (11 KOs)

Biggest strengths: Confidence - He firmly believes in his ability even though he doesn't have an abundance of experience. ★ **Defense -** Uses upper body movement and athleticism to consistently stay out of an opponent's punching range. ★ **Uppercuts -** His intelligence and timing have helped him set up perhaps the most underutilized, punishing punch in boxing.

Biggest question marks: Experience - He had just 40 amateur bouts (32-8), only one of his 17 professional fights has lasted more than six rounds and just one of his pro matches has been scheduled for more than eight rounds. ★ **Strength of opposition -** His dominating victory over Frank Galarza changed Hurd's career but eight of his 17 opponents had losing records and none other than Galarza was a proven prospect.

uppercut in the fourth round. He dominated the action thereafter and forced referee Russell Mora to stop the scheduled 10-rounder after another uppercut hurt Galarza badly in the sixth round.

"That win did not only open up doors for me," Hurd said, "it showed the world who Jarrett Hurd is. In one of the fighter meetings, they had a lot of doubt about me, saying that I didn't fight anyone and I wasn't a name. I went out there and showed none of that matters when you have the skills to do what you have to do.

"I knew I had to prove myself because they didn't know if I was able to stand up to the caliber fighter Frank Galarza was. I knew I was a much better fighter than that. I went out there and performed the way a lot of people didn't expect. I kept my composure and did what I was supposed to do."

Beating Galarza legitimized Hurd but Rodriguez doesn't intend to rush him into fights for which he isn't ready in 2016. Hurd had just 40 amateur fights and the 154-pound landscape is full of more experienced prospects than him.

"We mapped it out," Rodriguez said. "We followed the script and we're going to continue to do that, continue to bring him up at a pace that's comfortable but where he can learn and develop. Hopefully, within a few years he can challenge for a world title or something meaningful like that."

Hurd wants to honor Browner's memory and repay his parents, Fred and Brenda Hurd, for helping him financially and enabling him to concentrate on boxing full-time.

"I want to show them their belief in me wasn't wasted," Hurd said. "I hope (beating Galarza) puts me up higher in the rankings, opens up a lot of doors to step up in competition and one day fight for a title. I don't plan on being in this game for too long. I'm trying to make my mark in the boxing game at a young age and leave on top." RING

3 MORE TO WATCH

CHRISTIAN GONZALEZ
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT
12-0 (11 KOs)

The 20-year-old brother of former WBC featherweight champion Alejandro Gonzalez has knocked out 11 of his 12 opponents since he turned pro in August 2013. At 5 feet 8 inches, the Golden Boy Promotions prospect from Buena Park, California, has a size advantage over most foes in the 130-pound division. Just one of his pro opponents had a winning record, thus Gonzalez wants to face tougher opposition in 2016.

EGIDIJUS KAVALIAUSKAS
WELTERWEIGHT
11-0 (10 KOs)

Kavaliauskas, a knockout artist from Lithuania, stopped 10 straight foes after settling for a four-round, unanimous-decision win in his pro debut. The two-time Olympian, promoted by Top Rank Inc., has a fan-friendly style and a wealth of experience (more than 400 amateur fights). At 27, Kavaliauskas appears headed toward higher-profile fights in the near future.

REGIS PROGRAIS
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT
16-0 (13 KOs)

Prograis wears a werewolf mask into the ring because his nickname is "Rougarou," French for a half-man, half-beast fictional character. The 26-year-old southpaw from New Orleans, who's promoted by DiBella Entertainment, has defeated previously unbeaten opponents in his last two fights. His Dec. 11 stoppage of Abel Ramos was broadcast on Showtime.

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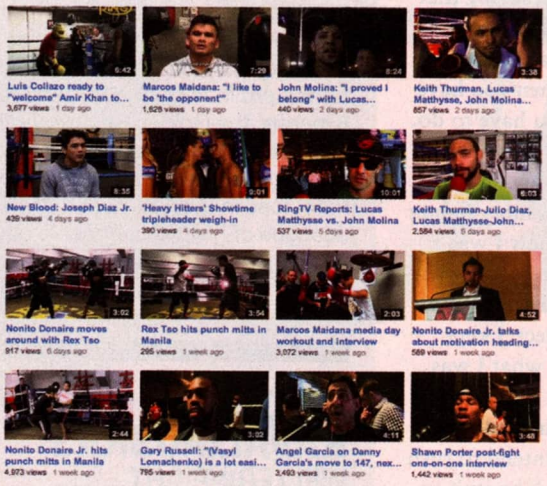

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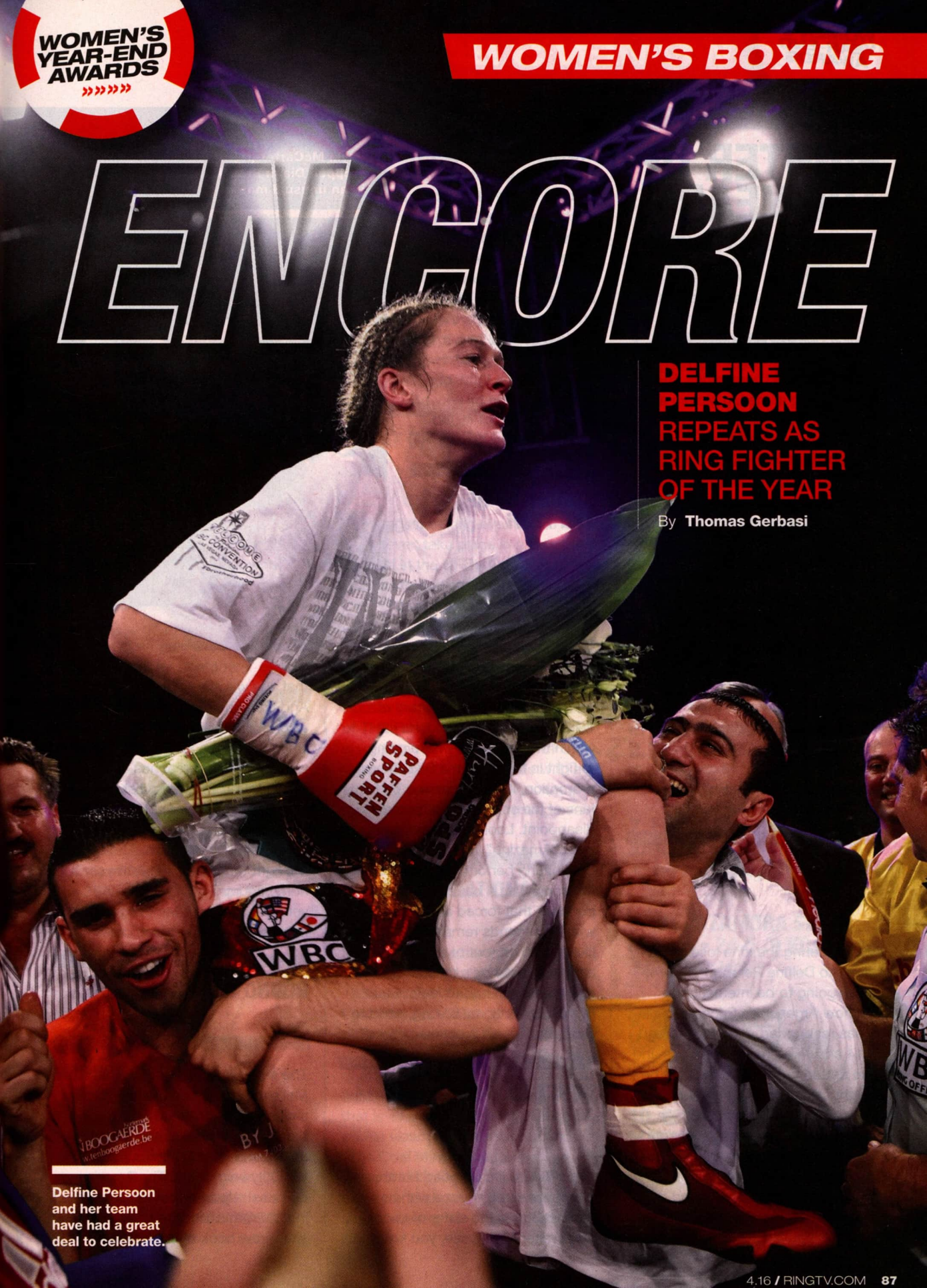
ENCORE

DELFINE PERSOON REPEATS AS RING FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

By **Thomas Gerbasi**



Delfine Persoon and her team have had a great deal to celebrate.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

DELFINE PERSOON

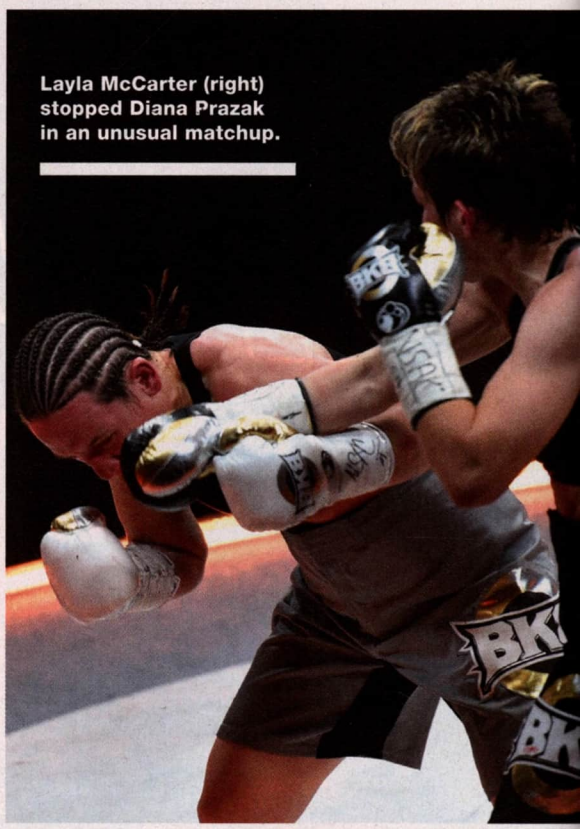
Truth be told, 2015 wasn't a year in which any fighter was a clear-cut choice as the best in the game. Jessica Chavez, Amanda Serrano, Ibeth Zamora Silva and Yazmin Rivas all turned in solid campaigns. But when looking at the big picture and true dominance, Belgium's Delfine Persoon made it two years in a row as THE RING's Fighter of the Year.

The 30-year-old from Roeselare didn't pick up defining wins, as she did in 2014 against Erica Anabella Farias and Diana Prazak, but the WBC lightweight champion did successfully defend her title twice against Nicole Boss and Maiva Hamadouche while also staying busy with a pair of wins in non-title fights over Florence Muthoni and Jane Kavulani. In the process, Persoon extended her win streak to 26 and has gained consideration from many as the top pound-for-pound fighter in the sport as reigning No. 1 Cecilia Braekhus missed all of 2015 due to injury.

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS
UD 10 KLARA SVENSSON

After suffering the lone loss of her career to Delfine Persoon in 2014, it was going to be interesting to see how Argentina's Erica Anabella Farias responded. Two wins to end 2014 answered most questions and also netted her a world title in a new weight class, junior welterweight, but traveling to Denmark to face unbeaten Swede Klara Svensson was going to be the true test of where "La Pantera" stood in the sport's hierarchy. Farias found the lanky Svensson to be a difficult puzzle to figure out early in their May bout but late in the fifth round a thudding overhand right dropped Svensson, who barely made it to her feet before the bell sounded. From there, it was Farias on the attack and Svensson gamely battling back but unable to use the stick-and-move strategy that worked so well for her. It wasn't a boxing match anymore but a fight, one that Farias won by way of a hard-fought 10-round unanimous decision.



Layla McCarter (right) stopped Diana Prazak in an unusual matchup.

KNOCKOUT OF THE YEAR

LAYLA MCCARTER
TKO 7 DIANA PRAZAK

You won't find Layla McCarter's seventh-round TKO of Diana Prazak on either fighter's record but when it was announced that the pair – both members of THE RING pound-for-pound list within the past year – were going to fight in the pit of the BKB boxing promotion, it was must-see TV for fans of the sport. McCarter didn't disappoint. Looking sharper than ever, "Amazing" was just that in a dominating performance. She closed the show with a barrage of accurate punches that forced a stoppage with 10 seconds remaining. It looked like something out of a video game, a master class by a master of the game who has had to look outside of the conventional boxing world to get fights. That's a shame.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

EDITH SOLEDAD MATTHYSSE
UD 10 JELENA MRDJENOVICH

At 14-7-1, Edith Soledad Matthysse will never scare anyone with her record. But as the sister of Lucas and Walter Matthysse, you know that she will always show up to fight. And fight she did against Canada's Jelena Mrdjenovich in August. Unbeaten since 2012, Mrdjenovich was in the upper reaches of THE RING pound-for-pound list and was showing no signs of slowing down. Matthysse stopped her hot streak via unanimous decision. And while the fight took place in Matthysse's home country of Argentina, the verdict was a just one even if the fight wasn't the prettiest to see.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

MELISSA MCMORROW VS. KENIA ENRIQUEZ: ROUND 4

The story of this February bout was Melissa McMorrow finally getting a close decision to go her way in Mexico, as she defeated then-unbeaten Kenia Enriquez to win the WBO flyweight title. The American demonstrated her determination in a dramatic fourth round, when she threw hook after hook at a

DAVID BECKER/GETTY IMAGES FOR DIRECTV

game 21-year-old opponent who also refused to back down. Fights aren't always pretty or technically sound. Sometimes you just have to bite down on the mouthpiece and fight. That's what McMorrow and Enriquez did.

TRAINER OF THE YEAR
NACHO BERISTAIN

The grand master of boxing trainers in Mexico, Ignacio "Nacho" Beristain, has earned his reputation as the teacher of several Mexican greats in his Romanza Gym in Mexico City, most notably the Marquez brothers. But he also has helped build one of the best fighters in women's boxing in Jessica Chavez. Chavez was no natural in the ring but through hard work and adherence to the teachings of Beristain was 2013 Fighter of the Year. And since 2011, the WBC flyweight champion is 15-1-1. That's a "Nacho" fighter right there.

COMEBACK OF THE YEAR
MELISSA HERNANDEZ

No one will ever accuse Melissa Hernandez of being quiet but the popular New Yorker quietly reeled off three wins in 2015 over Ashleigh Curry, Loli Munoz and Gina Chamie. The 35-year-old didn't face killers but, because the big names are reluctant to fight her, staying busy is key for her until she can lure one or more of them into the ring. You can expect the "Huracan Shark" to make some noise in 2016.

PROSPECT OF THE YEAR
SENIESA ESTRADA

As the man responsible for moving the career of middleweight champion Gennady Golovkin, Tom Loeffler of K2 Promotions knows what he's doing. So when "GGG" successfully defended his belt against Willie Monroe at The Forum in Inglewood, California, in May, Loeffler made sure he had some popular local talent on the show. One of those local fighters was Seniesa Estrada, who moved to 4-0 as a pro with a win over Carly Batey on that card and added another victory to her record by the end of the year. The world should expect big things from the 23-year-old flyweight from East Los Angeles, who is a complete package in and out of the ring.

EVENT OF THE YEAR
HOLLY HOLM VS. RONDA ROUSEY

The biggest boxing event of 2015 didn't even take place in a boxing ring but in the UFC's Octagon. The lead-up to and aftermath of the UFC 193 main event in November between Holly Holm and Ronda Rousey was filled with storylines applicable to boxing fans, who weren't shy about taking sides. From Rousey's appearance on the cover of THE RING to three-division world-champion Holm winning the UFC women's bantamweight title with a stunning second-round knockout, this was an event that crossed over in a big way.

MOST INSPIRATIONAL
CHRISTY MARTIN

March 16 will be the 20th anniversary of Christy Martin's 1996 win over Deirdre Gogarty, the fight that put Martin on the cover of Sports Illustrated and women's boxing on the map. And while plenty of attention will rightfully fall on that fight, it's what Martin is doing now that is even more notable. A high-profile victim of domestic violence, "The Coal Miner's Daughter" is a survivor bringing awareness to that plague and showing the world that she is winning her biggest fight … in life.

WOMEN'S POUND FOR POUND

1. CECILIA BRAEKHUS
Norway • 27-0 (7 KOs)
Welterweight

2. DELFINE PERSOON
Belgium • 35-1 (16 KOs)
Lightweight

3. JACKIE NAVA
MEXICO • 32-4-3 (14 KOs)
Junior featherweight

4. JELENA MRDJENOVICH
Canada • 35-10-1 (19 KOs)
Featherweight

5. JESSICA CHAVEZ
Mexico • 25-4-3 (4 KOs)
Flyweight

6. LAYLA MCCARTER
U.S. • 36-13-5 (8 KOs)
Lightweight

7. ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS
Argentina • 22-1 (10 KOs)
Junior welterweight

8. IBETH ZAMORA SILVA
Mexico • 24-5 (9 KOs)
Junior flyweight

9. ALICIA ASHLEY
U.S. • 23-10-1 (4 KOs)
Junior featherweight

10. EDITH SOLEDAD MATTHYSSE
Argentina • 14-7-1 (1 KO)
Featherweight

Through fights of Jan. 3, 2016

RINGSIDE REPORTS

BY NORM FRAUENHEIM

TYSON FURY UD 12 WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

Date: Nov. 28
Site: Esprit Arena, Dusseldorf, Germany
Division: Heavyweight
Weights: Fury 247 pounds, Klitschko 245
RING ratings (before fight): Fury No. 3, Klitschko C
Networks: HBO, RTL

The mounting numbers were beginning to look like history. Increasingly it looked as if Wladimir Klitschko might do the monumental. But monuments fall all the time. History, after all, is also about what time does to everybody and everything. Otherwise, there wouldn't be all those ruins.

In a stunning defeat, Klitschko's chances at surpassing Joe Louis, one of the most enduring names of all time, collapsed. Klitschko was favored to win a 19th successive title defense, which would have put him six away from Louis' string of 25 – the longest in any weight class – and tied for second with Larry Holmes.

Louis' place in history is safe. Klitschko's pursuit of history stopped at No. 3 because of a unanimous-decision loss to Tyson Fury.

Far and away, it was the upset of the year, but somehow that doesn't do it justice. Klitschko (64-4, 53 KOs) executed his nine-year, seven-month reign with machine-like efficiency. Contenders came off the assembly line, one after another, and Klitschko finished them off with a humdrum reliability. It wasn't dramatic but, man-oh-man, was it predictable.

His defeat creates an opportunity to inject some intrigue into a division devoid of any compelling story lines, other than Klitschko, for a generation. Surely it provides a bully pulpit for the 27-year-old Fury (25-0, 18 KOs).

Fury likes to sing. Klitschko was treated to lyrics from Bette Midler's "Wind Beneath My Wings" before the opening bell and Aerosmith's "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing" after the 115-112, 116-111, 115-112 scores were announced.

Mostly, however, Fury likes to trash talk. He insulted more people than Donald Trump before winning a wardrobe full of heavyweight belts. He apologized after people protested his nomination for another prize, the BBC Sports Personality of the Year. The mea culpa was a bit of a surprise. He was only having fun, he said, which is perhaps another way of saying more insults are soon to follow.

"Anybody can be Mr. Boring," Fury said. "That ain't me."

But there's some doubt about whether Fury, who was once dropped by the light-hitting Steve Cunningham, can stay in the headlines for long. Klitschko has already exercised a rematch clause.

Before the New Year, the when and where were still to be negotiated. But that brings us back to time, the element that might be a bigger challenge to Klitschko than the 6-foot-9 Fury ever was. Klitschko turns 40 on March 25.

"I saw my face in the mirror and it didn't look so nice," said Klitschko, who sustained a cut above his left eye from a fifth-round head-butt.

Klitschko, forced to postpone the Fury bout from October because of a calf injury in training camp, also might have seen some of the wear and tear staring back at him. Signs of it were there in a dull victory in April over Bryant Jennings at New York's Madison Square Garden. Against Fury, he landed only 52 punches, according to CompuBox. That's fewer than five punches a round on a night when he was about as active as a monument.

WORLDWIDE RESULTS— Go to: bit.ly/worldwide-results or scan the QR code to see weekly fight results at RingTV.com.

A key to Tyson Fury's victory was his ability to keep Wladimir Klitschko at a distance.

PAFFEN SPORT
s.Oliver

NO. 6 ELEIDER ALVAREZ
MD 12
NO. 7 ISAAC CHILEMBA
Nov. 28, Quebec City, Canada (Showtime)

There's not much left to say about whether Adonis Stevenson and Sergey Kovalev will ever fight. Talk has cooled. If it happens, great. If not, the clock is ticking. Time to move on.

For Kovalev, that appears to mean a clash with Andre Ward in late 2016. For Stevenson, the next step looks a lot like Eleider Alvarez (19-0, 10 KOs), who became the mandatory challenger for Stevenson's WBC light heavyweight belt with a majority decision over Isaac Chilemba (24-3-2, 10 KOs).

Alvarez scored early, faltered midway and survived late. To wit: The unbeaten Colombian did what he had to despite a bizarre 118-110 card in his favor turned in by Peter Hary. Maybe Hary was daydreaming about Stevenson-Kovalev. Whatever, his fellow judges got it right – 115-113 for Alvarez and the other a draw.

NO. 2 JAMES DEGALE
UD 12
LUCIAN BUTE
Nov. 28, Quebec City, Canada (Showtime)

Victories on the left side of the ledger in James DeGale's record are adding up and yielding interest.

"I want to get the Maserati and get the millions," he told U.K. media.

DeGale (22-1, 14 KOs) continued to invest in that hope with a 117-111, 116-112, 117-111 decision over Lucian Bute (32-3, 25 KOs), who gave a respectable performance but has lost three of his last five. The victory was an affirmation of credentials DeGale earned last May in beating Andre Dirrell for a vacant super middleweight title. It was also DeGale's 12th successive victory since his lone loss – a decision against George Groves – that left him depressed and uncertain about what's next.

No doubt now. DeGale said he wants a shot at the WBC belt held by Badou Jack.

"Let's do it in Vegas in April," he said.

ADRIAN GRANADOS
TKO 8
NO. 8 AMIR IMAM
Nov. 28, Quebec City, Canada (Showtime)

Amir Imam was told not to fight Adrian Granados.

Now he knows why.

His ride from prospect to world-class was abruptly interrupted by Granados (17-4-2, 12 KOs), who got up from a first-round knockdown and then broke Imam down with persistent pressure for an eighth-round TKO in a contender for Upset of the Year.

Imam (18-1, 15 KOs) saw his unbeaten run end at 2:34 of the round, on the ropes with no defense for repeated combos from Granados.

The loss left uncertainty about Imam's future, surely, and also about who could now be in line to fight for Viktor Postol's junior welterweight belt.

"I believe I should be the mandatory challenger," said Granados, a Chicago fighter whose four losses have come against fighters with an overall record of 71-2. "I came to take it. Come on."

YU KIMURA
SD 12
NO. 1 PEDRO GUEVARA
Nov. 28, Sendai, Japan (WOWOW)

Pedro Guevara had a WBC belt when he landed in Japan. The fact he returned to Mexico without it has generated controversy.

Japanese junior flyweight Yu Kimura took it from him with a split decision in one of 2015's biggest upsets. But Guevara (26-2-1, 17 KOs), who took the same title home after a 2014 upset of Akira Yaegashi in Tokyo, argued Kimura (18-2-1, 3 KOs) got a gift from the judges.

It was 115-113 on two cards, one from Jun Bae Lim of Korea and the other by Thailand's Noppharat Sricharoen. However, the third judge, American Barry Lindenman, favored Guevara by a one-sided 117-111 score.

Guevara, whose jab was neutralized midway through the bout, complained that his work had been tossed "into the trash."

NO. 6 DANIEL JACOBS
TKO 1
NO. 3 PETER QUILLIN
Dec. 5, Brooklyn, N.Y. (Showtime)

He was The Golden Child. Now he's The Miracle Man. But there's no nickname that really captures what Daniel Jacobs has done. Is doing.

Beating cancer is a victory without rival. It's life-defining. For Jacobs, it's more than that. It has been a rebirth that continued with an astonishing first-round stoppage of friend Peter Quillin for a title that puts him squarely in the middle of the 160-pound championship mix, perhaps against Billy Joe Saunders.

Jacobs (31-1, 28 KOs) is 9-0 since he was diagnosed with bone cancer in 2011, about a year after his only loss.

"He's fighting something I can't understand," said Quillin (32-1-1, 23 KOs), who was hurt by an overhand right and then appeared to be out on his feet after successive rights that prompted Harvey Dock's stoppage at 1:25 of the first.

He – we – can only marvel at it.

NO. 3 NONITO DONAIRE
UD 12 **CESAR JUAREZ**

Dec. 11, San Juan, Puerto Rico (TruTV)

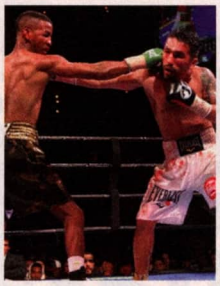
Nonito Donaire had more than a cut near his right eye, swelling near his left eye and a sprain in his left ankle.

He had a victory and a resurrected future.

Donaire (36-3, 23 KOs) paid a painful price but it's never easy to go home, or at least back to what you were. Donaire went back to 122 pounds and re-discovered the stuff of what he was in 2012, when he was the Boxing Writers Association of America's Fighter of the Year.

He needed every bit of it against Cesar Juarez (17-4, 13 KOs), who got up from two fourth-round knockdowns. Juarez went on to batter Donaire in the late rounds before losing a 116-110, 117-109, 116-110 decision.

"The toughest fight in my life," said Donaire, who might face another one in April in a WBO title defense against ex-126-pound champ Evgeny Gradovich.



RANCES BARTHELEMY
UD 12
NO. 3 DENIS SHAFIKOV

Dec. 18, Las Vegas (Spike TV)

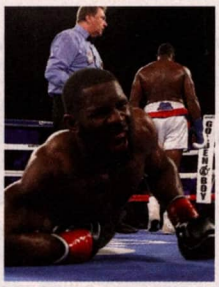
Rances Barthelemy's life has been one lesson after another in the art of adaptation. He has done it to survive as a Cuban defector. He does it to win in the ring.

And win is all he has ever done.

Once a junior lightweight titleholder, Barthelemy (24-0, 13 KOs) is now a lightweight champ after scoring a 116-112, 119-109, 116-112 decision over Denis Shafikov for the IBF's vacant belt.

Shafikov (36-2-1, 19 KOs) was aggressive but nothing more, especially in the later rounds against Barthelemy, who fled Cuba before the 2008 Olympics.

Barthelemy opened up a cut above Shafikov's right eye in the seventh round and then targeted the wound with precise shots enabled by a 4½-inch advantage in reach. Shafikov, a Russian nicknamed Genghis Khan and now 0-2 in world title fights, had no counter and, in the end, had no chance against the Cuban.



LUIS ORTIZ
TKO 7
NO. 5 BRYANT JENNINGS

Dec. 19, Verona, N.Y. (HBO)

Luis Ortiz talked about a new era. Maybe one is about to unfold, although there's still a chance that the old era could make a comeback. We'll have to wait on Wladimir Klitschko's rematch of his stunning loss to Tyson Fury.

But if a new age has dawned, it figures to include Ortiz (24-0, 21 KOs), who stormed onto the heavyweight stage with a crushing seventh-round stoppage of Bryant Jennings (19-2, 10 KOs).

"Everyone has to take me into consideration as a heavyweight," said Ortiz, who defected from Cuba in 2010.

There's plenty to consider. And fear. Mostly, there's power that put Jennings on the canvas with a left uppercut in the seventh and then finished him at 2:41 of the round with right to the head followed by a huge left.

NO. 4 BILLY JOE SAUNDERS
MD 12 **NO. 2 ANDY LEE**

Dec. 19, Manchester, UK (BoxNation, Showtime Extreme)

Billy Joe Saunders was the last Brit to win a belt in an amazing U.K. run in 2015 with a dull decision over Irishman Andy Lee but the upset was significant for what it might mean in 2016.

Saunders (23-0, 12 KOs), whose right hand scored two knockdowns in the third round, took the WBO's version of the 160-pound title from Lee (34-3-1, 24 KOs). Lee's listless performance in losing on two (114-112, 115-111) of three cards led to booing in the ninth. The belt is meaningful only because Gennady Golovkin's goal has always been to unify the crown.

"We have been in communication with Gennady Golovkin's people, who have approached us with a firm offer," Saunders' promoter, Frank Warren, wrote on his website in late December.

NO. 4 KAZUTO IOKA
TKO 11
NO. 5 JUAN CARLOS REVECO

Dec. 31, Osaka, Japan (TBS, TyC Sports)

New Year's Eve includes more than too much booze, stupid hats and imminent hangovers. Add Kazuto Ioka to the party.

Ioka (19-1, 11 KOs) extended his New Year's Eve record to 5-0 with a stoppage of Juan Carlos Reveco (36-3, 19 KOs) in a rematch of their bout last April, which Ioka won by majority decision.

Ioka left no doubt this time with a victory that might put him in the 2016 mix for a shot at Roman Gonzalez.

He employed evasive tactics early, scored repeatedly in the later rounds and finished Japan's year-ending show with a left followed by right to the body.

The combo resulted in the bout's lone knockdown. One was enough. A glassy-eyed Reveco, looking like another Times Square reveler, was finished for the night.

Referee Mark Nelson ended it at 1:57 of the round.

ALVAREZ/DEGALE: MATHIEU BELANGER/GETTY IMAGES; KIMURA: JIJI PRESS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; JACOBS: RICH SCHULTZ; DONAIRE: PETER AMADOR / TOP RANK; ORTIZ: ALEX MENENDEZ - HOGANPHOTOS/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS; SAUNDERS: DAVE THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES;

COMING UP

PREDICTIONS ARE MADE BY RING STAFF MEMBERS MICHAEL ROSENTHAL, DOUG FISCHER AND BRIAN HARTY

JANUARY

SERGEY KOVALEV VS. JEAN PASCAL

Date: Jan. 30
Location: Bell Centre, Montreal
Division: Light heavyweights (for Kovalev's IBF, WBA and WBO titles)
TV: HBO
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★
Also fighting: Dmitry Mikhaylenko vs. Ray Robinson, welterweights; Renan St. Juste vs. Francis Lafreniere, middleweights.
Significance: Kovalev (28-0-1, 25 KOs) stopped Pascal (30-3-1, 17 KOs) in eight rounds in an entertaining fight at the Bell Centre last March. The Russian was too good and too strong for the game Canadian then. There's no reason to believe anything will change in the rematch.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Kovalev KO 5; Fischer – Kovalev KO 7; Harty – Kovalev KO 11

JAN. 30 – George Groves vs. Andrea Di Luisa, super middleweights, London (Sky)

FEBRUARY

CARL FRAMPTON VS. SCOTT QUIGG

Date: Feb. 27
Location: Manchester Arena, Manchester, England
Division: Junior featherweights (for Frampton's IBF title)
TV: Sky
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Significance: The biggest U.K. fight since Froch-Groves II features two gifted young stars. Frampton (21-0, 14 KOs) went down twice against Alejandro Gonzalez in his U.S. debut but won a one-sided decision. Quigg (31-0-2, 23 KOs) is coming off a sensational second-round KO of Kiko Martinez. The winner will be sitting very pretty.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Frampton KO 7; Fischer – Quigg UD; Harty – Quigg SD.

FEB. 5 – Randy Caballero vs. Ruben Garcia, junior featherweights, Indio, Calif. (Estrella TV)
FEB. 13 – Terry Flanagan vs. Derry Mathews, lightweights (for Flanagan's WBO title), Liverpool, England.
FEB. 20 – Felix Sturm vs. Fedor Chudinov, super middleweights, Oberhausen, Germany.
FEB. 27 – Terence Crawford vs. Henry Lundy, junior welterweights (for Crawford's WBO title), New York City (HBO). Also, Felix Verdejo vs. William Silva, lightweights.
FEB. 27 – Ola Afolabi vs. Marco Huck, cruiserweights, Halle, Germany.

MARCH

MARCH 5 – Ruslan Chagaev vs. Lucas Browne, heavyweights, Grozny, Russia.
MARCH 26 – Andre Ward vs. TBA, Oakland, Calif. (HBO).
MARCH 26 – Julio Ceja vs. Hugo Ruiz, junior featherweights (for Ceja's WBC title), Los Angeles.
MARCH 26 – Jose Pedraza vs. Stephen Smith, junior lightweights (for Pedraza's IBF title), New York City.

The Carl Frampton (left)-Scott Quigg fight on Feb. 27 will be the biggest in the U.K. since Carl Froch-Geroge Groves II.

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ICONS MEET

Two of the greatest fighters who ever laced 'em up are shaking hands in this classic photo of them after they signed to fight one another. Hall of Famers Mickey Walker (left) and Harry Greb fought only once, for Greb's middleweight title on July 2, 1925, at the Polo Grounds in New York. And it was a doozy. Walker, the reigning welterweight champ who often fought heavier opponents, handled himself well early in the fight but Greb dominated the championship rounds – including a wild 14th in which Walker was hurt – to win a unanimous 15-round decision and retain his title. The fun wasn't over there, at least not according to boxing lore. The fighters supposedly ran into one another at a bar that night and engaged in an immediate rematch. It's not clear who came out on top in the second meeting – some say Greb won again, others contend he was knocked unconscious by a sucker punch – but that doesn't detract from a terrific tale. Walker went on to win the 160-pound title and fought until 1935. Greb's career and life were cut short when he died as a result of surgery to repair damage in his nose about a year after the fight, one of boxing's most tragic stories. RING

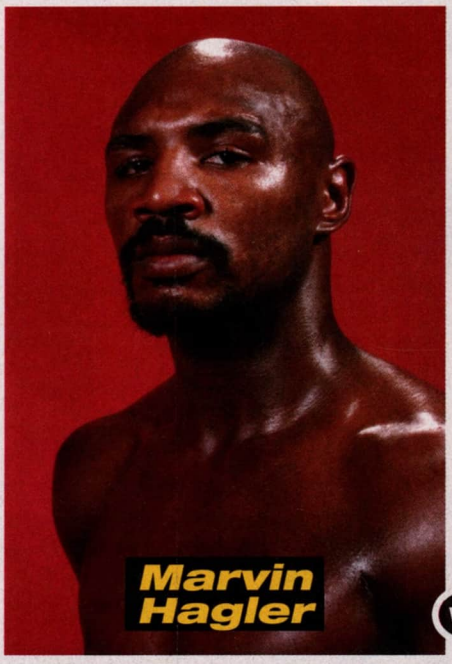
#ATTHEFIGHTS

By **Lamar Clark**

FOR BOXING AFICIONADOS ONLY

OLD SCHOOL vs. NEW SCHOOL

WHO WINS? ★ VOTE ON INSTAGRAM @RINGTV ★ #ATTHEFIGHTS



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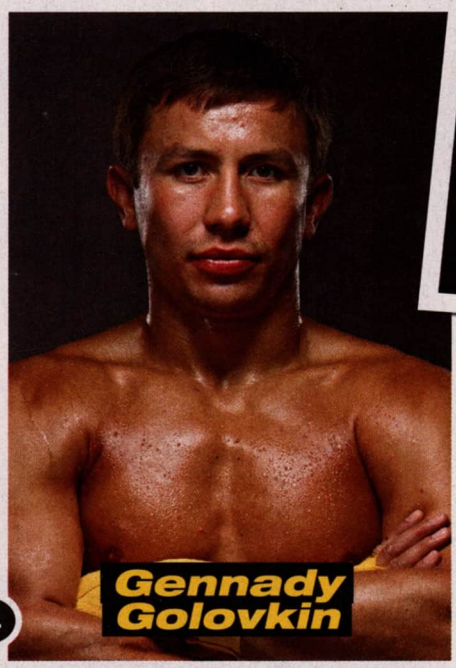
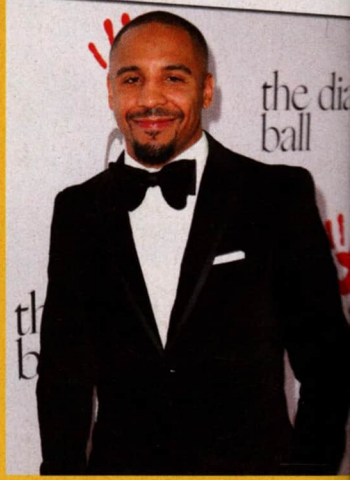


TALE OF THE TAPE ★ MIDDLEWEIGHT

MAY 23, 1954	BORN	APRIL 8, 1982
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY	BIRTHPLACE	KARAGANDA, KAZAKHSTAN
"MARVELOUS"	ALIAS	"GGG"
SOUTHPAW	STANCE	ORTHODOX
62-3-2 (52 KOs)	RECORD	34-0-0 (31 KOs)
78 PERCENT	KO PERCENTAGE	91 PERCENT
75 INCHES	REACH	70 INCHES

STYLES MAKE FIGHTS



At top, two power couples – Miguel Cotto (left) and Melissa Guzman with actors Jada Pinkett Smith and Will Smith – posed for a shot at The Diamond Ball II in Santa Monica, California. Andre Ward (at bottom) also attended.

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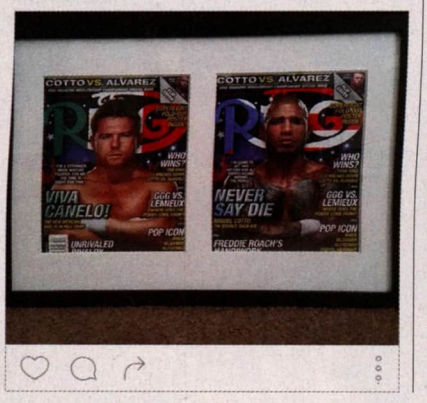

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